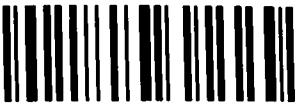
00044773

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016


00044773

THE

GREAT METROPOLIS.

44773

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LORDS AND COMMONS."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

SECOND SERIES.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1837.

114773

CONTENTS

OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

Locality of the Stock Exchange—Rules and regulations—Different descriptions of Stock—Meaning of technical terms explained—The members of the Stock Exchange—Miscellaneous observations—Conduct of the members—Amount of business done in the place—Explanation of the mode of doing it—The late Mr. Rothschild—Attempts to compete with him—His occasional losses—Rapidity with which fortunes are lost or made on the Stock Exchange—Extent to which the funds sometimes rise or fall—The late Mr. Goldsmid—General remarks

Page 1

CHAPTER II.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

Historical sketch and description of—Number of persons who visit it in a day—Business done in it—Supposed wealth of persons attending it—The late Mr. Rothschild—General observations—Negotiation of bills of exchange—The subject of exchanges explained 83

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD BAILEY.

General remarks—Description of the place—Observations about the proceedings—Central Criminal Courts Act—Prisoners' Counsel Bill—Counsel practising at the Old Bailey—Passing sentence on prisoners convicted—Amusing scenes in the course of the trials—Anecdote of the late Mr. Justice Buller—Witty observations sometimes made by prisoners when sentence is passed—Miscellaneous observations—Mr. Curtis—The Recorder 134

CHAPTER IV.

NEWGATE.

Origin of the name—Erection of the building—Description of the interior—Classification of the prisoners—The chapel—"Condemned Sermons"—General remarks—State of a prisoner's mind the night before his execution—Preparations for an execution—Miscellaneous observations . . 216

CHAPTER V.

PENNY-A-LINERS.

Precariousness of their employment—Their labour and enterprise—Their character—Their ingenuity in finding employment for themselves—The feeling they entertain towards each other—Various anecdotes respecting them—Immutability of their character and phraseology—Concluding observations 282

THE

GREAT METROPOLIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE.

Locality of the Stock Exchange—Rules and regulations—Different descriptions of Stock—Meaning of technical terms explained—The members of the Stock Exchange—Miscellaneous observations—Conduct of the members—Amount of business done in the place—Explanation of the mode of doing it—The late Mr. Rothschild—Attempts to compete with him—His occasional losses—Rapidity with which fortunes are lost or made on the Stock Exchange—Extent to which the funds sometimes rise or fall—The late Mr. Goldsmid—General remarks.

The Stock Exchange is a place of which one hears every day in the year, and every hour in the day, and yet very few know anything of

it beyond the simple fact that it is the place where all the transactions in the funds occur. It is situated in Capel Court, nearly opposite the door at the east end of the Bank leading to the Rotunda. It is the property of a joint-stock company, and is a speculation which has turned out well for the shareholders. It was erected more than a quarter of a century ago. Before the present building was appropriated to transactions in the funds, those transactions took place in a house in Threadneedle Street. And it is a fact worthy of being mentioned, that though no exception has ever been taken to the business done in the Stock Exchange on the ground of the illegality of the place, that business actually is illegal. By an act of parliament which has never yet been repealed, it was ordained that all buying and selling of the public securities should take place in the Rotunda of the Bank. By a sort of common consent, however, the members adjourned from the Rotunda to the late Stock Exchange, and thence to the present, there they

have remained ever since, no one troubling himself about the legality of their transactions.

The regulations which relate to the admission of members are numerous. Under the first general head of "Admissions," they are seventeen in number. Then comes the "Appendix to Admissions," in which are specified the forms to be gone through by every candidate for membership. The regulations are stringent as well as numerous; so strict that one would be apt to suppose that no man could ever cross the threshold of the house who was not a very exemplar of all that is praiseworthy in private morals and in public conduct. There is a committee for general purposes, in whom the right of admission is vested for one year, from the 25th of March of any year till the 25th of the following March. A re-election of members takes place every year, previous to the 25th of March The election always takes place by ballot. The form of application is by letter, addressed to the secretary of the committee for general purposes. The applicant must state his name and

residence, and furnish the address of his bankers. He must also signify his readiness to regulate his conduct as a member of the Stock Exchange by those conditions and rules which have been already, or may afterwards be, adopted for the government of the members generally. Every person applying for admission who happens to be in partnership with another, must sign a separate application for himself; and he must state distinctly, that neither on his own account, nor as the partner of any firm, is he engaged in any business other than that usually transacted at the Stock Exchange.

No new application is ever attended to by the committee unless the party applying be recommended by three persons who have been members of the house for at least two years. Each of the parties so recommending an applicant, must not only have fulfilled all his own engagements as a member of the house, but he must enter into an engagement to pay the sum of 300*l.* to the candidate's creditors in case such candidate, after his admission, shall be publicly declared

a defaulter either in the Stock Exchange or Foreign stock market, within two years of the date of his admission. The 900*l.* of securities thus forfeited are applied to the liquidation of the defaulter's debts. The only instances in which these conditions are departed from are, first, in the case of a person who had been previously a clerk in the house for four years, or been a member of the Foreign Stock Exchange for three years immediately preceding, and had fulfilled all his engagements therein. Second, where the applicant has been a member of the foreign house for five years prior to his application, and discharged all his engagements therein, and whose character will at the same time bear the test of a rigid examination. Third, where the candidate is a foreigner not naturalised, or not having letters of denization. In the first case, it is only necessary that the party applying be recommended by two persons, each of whom enters into a security to the amount of 250*l.*: in the second, the candidate is admissible on the recommendation of two of the managers of the foreign house, being also members of the

Stock Exchange, or by two of the committee for general purposes,—in neither of which cases will the parties giving the recommendation be required to enter into any security at all. In the third and last case of exception to the conditions and regulations just mentioned, the party is held to be inadmissible, unless he has been a resident in the United Kingdom for five years immediately previous to the date of his application for admission, and unless he is recommended by five members of the Stock Exchange, each of whom must enter into his own security for the fulfilment of the applicant's engagements to the amount of 300*l.*

In order to guard against improper recommendations from an expected participation in the benefits to be derived from membership in the Stock Exchange, by the persons recommending any party for admission,—it is stipulated, that the candidate must not, after his admission, enter into partnership with any of the individuals recommending him for the period of two years after the time of admission, unless additional security, to an equal amount,

be provided for the time which remains unexpired. On the same ground the recommendation of one partner by another will not be attended to, nor the security of any one such partner for another be accepted. Supposing the richest and most influential member of the Stock Exhange were to recommend his partner for admission, not the slightest attention would be paid to it.

Bill and discount brokers are now specially excluded from the Stock Exchange: other departments of business are denounced in general terms. Neither must the applicant's wife be engaged in any sort of business whatever. This regulation has sometimes caused a good deal of merriment in the city.

The committee, very properly, have a great horror of bankrupts. No party applying for admission, who has been a bankrupt, or has compounded with his creditors, shall be eligible until two years after he has obtained his certificate, or fulfilled the conditions of his deed of composition, unless, indeed—a case which is a perfect rarity in these degenerate times—he

shall have paid his debts in full. It is also distinctly stipulated that no applicant who has more than once been a bankrupt, or more than once compounded with his creditors, shall be eligible for admission until he has paid his debts in full. This is manifestly telling the poor fellow that he must "all hope abandon" of entering the house in Capel Court: why do not the committee act in a straightforward manner, and tell him so in so many words? Who ever heard of a man who had been twice a bankrupt, and twice compounded with his creditors, paying them in full? We expect to see no such gratifying spectacle until Robert Owen's bright visions of a new and perfect state of society have been realised.

The committee are hard customers to deal with in other respects than those I have mentioned. To make assurance doubly sure as to the character and circumstances of the candidate for admission, they will not be satisfied with the mere testimony or engagements of the parties recommending him, but put the following questions to himself: "Is this your signature?" (showing

him his letter of application.) Have you read the resolution* on the back of the letter? Are you a natural born subject? Are you of age? Are you engaged in partnership? Are you, or is your wife,† engaged in business? Are you a clerk in any public or private establishment?" In addition to these questions, the committee reserve to themselves the right of asking him, whether he has ever been a bankrupt, or whether he has ever compounded with his creditors, &c. &c.

But the regulations of the Stock Exchange are not strict merely as regards the admission of members; they are no less so as respects their continuance there; so that if a candidate

* The following is the resolution alluded to:—"That whenever the creditors of any defaulter shall represent to the committee for general purposes, or whenever it shall otherwise appear to the said committee, that the conduct of such defaulter has been dishonourable, or marked with any circumstances of impropriety, the said committee have the right to cause the name of such defaulter to be affixed to the blackboard in the Stock Exchange."

† That is, of course, provided he has one.

fancy that he has got over all the unpleasant circumstances, when he has received intimation of his being elected, he will find himself very much mistaken. He must, while a member, recollect the homely adage of not hallooing before he is out of the wood, which he never can be so long as he is in Capel Court; consequently, he must not halloo at all. He will find that it is no sinecure, or mere matter-of-course affair, scrupulously to observe the rules and regulations to which he engages to conform his conduct in all his transactions as a member of the house. There are many of these regulations which relate only, properly speaking, to himself; that is to say, if he infringes them he only suffers in his purse the same way as, in the ordinary transactions of life, a man suffers who makes an illegal bargain, or does something else which is contrary to the law. For example, if a member make any bargain beyond the regular hours of business, which are from ten to four, the committee will not recognise that bargain, in the event of the other party taking advantage of the

infringement of the rules, as a valid transaction. Another regulation affecting a broker's own purse is, that which provides that no bonds can be returned on account of imperfection, which have been kept longer than three days. There are various others of a similar kind, affecting the member's own pecuniary interests; but it is not necessary I should advert to them in detail. In those cases in which a member transgresses the regulations of the committee in such a way as to affect the interests of other brokers or the body generally, he incurs the penalty of expulsion. I may mention two instances in which he renders himself liable to be expelled. If, finding himself unable to perform his engagements, he arrange privately with his creditors, and the circumstance becomes known to others, his name is to be at once affixed on a particular part of the Stock Exchange as a defaulter, and as an expelled party. A public failure also exposes the defaulter to expulsion; but then he is eligible for re-admission after the lapse of six months, provided he pay from his own resources

at least one-third of the balance of any loss that may occur on his speculations, whether on his own account, or on that of principals.

The cases in which members may transgress the rules, though the penalty annexed is not so severe as expulsion, are a great deal too numerous to mention. Not the least terrible of the penalties incurred, is that of having one's name written in legible characters on the black board kept for the purpose, and publicly exhibited in the place. This punishment can only be inferior in severity to the ancient one in many country towns, of having one's person exhibited in the pillory to the gaze of the mob, and the being pelted by various rotten commodities and nameless dead animals into the bargain. What aggravates the evil is, that it is not necessary in order to having a member's name chalked up on the black-board, that any substantive offence beyond that of having failed, be proved or preferred against him. It is enough that the committee for general purposes come to the conclusion—no matter by what means they ar-

rive at it—that the conduct of the defaulter has been dishonourable.

The ceremony of declaring a defaulter is an awful one to the unfortunate party himself; so very awful, that he always takes care to be at a reasonable distance from the house on the occasion. One of the waiters, before announcing the name, calls attention to it by giving two or three "tremendous blows" with a hammer on the wainscot. The noise which everlastingly prevails in the place, as will be afterwards seen, renders the aid of the hammer necessary to make the waiter heard. When a temporary calm has been produced, he announces the name of the defaulter, who from that moment dare not show his face in the house until he gets his affairs managed, on pain of receiving personal treatment of a nature compared with which being roughly tossed in a blanket would be gentleness itself.

The committee,* which consists of thirty mem-

* Either proprietors or subscribers are eligible to office, and the right of election is equally possessed by proprietors and subscribers.

bers, annually chosen by ballot, have various other arbitrary powers, which they are not loth to exercise. A striking instance occurred in December last. A member having incurred their highnesses' displeasure, they did everything in their power to get him expelled; but finding in the end, on the advice of counsel, that the rules and regulations would not warrant in his case such an exercise of authority, they were obliged to content themselves with something like an expression of regret that they were not possessed of the power to expel the party.

The terms of admission to the Stock Exchange are at present 10*l.* 10*s.* The number of members is about 800.

In the quotation of the prices of the various descriptions of stock, certain regulations are observed. The prices of India stock, Bank stock, and South Sea stock or annuities, are not quoted where the amount purchased is under 500*l.*; nor is a quotation of prices made under the usual head on consols, reduced 4 per cents, 3½ per cents, or any other government perpetual annuities, where the sum contracted for

does not amount to 1,000*l.* If the sum amount to 500*l.* and be under 1,000*l.*, the prices are to be quoted, but under a separate head. In the cases of omnium, scrip, and India bonds, the quotation is to be made when the amount purchased reaches 1,000*l.* The prices of exchequer bills are quoted when the sum contracted for is 500*l.*; or 100*l.* of small exchequer bills. The prices of long annuities, or any other terminable annuities, are quoted when the sum contracted for amounts to 25*l.* per annum. In the case of shares of any public companies, the rule by which the quotation of prices is regulated, is that such quotation shall be made when the purchaser has bought to a sufficient amount to entitle him to a vote at the company's public meetings. As regards foreign stock again, the prices are only to be quoted when the sums contracted for shall amount to 1,000*l.* stock or scrip, 1,000 fs. French rentes, 250 ducats Neapolitan rentes, 1,036*l.* Russian stock, or any other foreign security representing about 1,000*l.* stock.

It is a fact not generally known, that by

one of the regulations of the Stock Exchange, any person purchasing stock in the funds, or any of the public companies, has a right to demand of the seller as many transfers as there are even thousand pounds in the amount bought. Suppose, for instance, that any person were to purchase 10,000*l.* stock, then, instead of having the whole made over to him by one ticket of transfer, he has a right to demand, if he so pleases, ten separate transfers from the party or parties of whom he purchased.

The descriptions of English stock which are least generally understood are scrip and omnium. Scrip means the receipt for any instalment or instalments which may have been paid on any given amount which has been purchased, of any government loan. This receipt or scrip is marketable,—the party purchasing it, either at a premium or discount as the case chances to be, becoming of course bound to pay up the remainder of the sum, on pain of forfeiting the money he has given for it. Omnium means the various kinds of stock in which a loan is ab-

sorbed; or to make the thing still more intelligible, a person purchasing a certain quantity of omnium, purchases given proportions of the various descriptions of government securities.

Bargains made one day are always checked the following day, by the parties themselves or their clerks. This is done by calling over their respective books one against another. In most transactions, what is called an option is given, by mutual consent, to each party. This is often of great importance to the speculator, and should always be stipulated for where circumstances will permit. There are so many different kinds of options in the purchase or sale of stock for time, that it is difficult to make them intelligible to the general reader. What is termed the put and the call, or the put and call for the account day, or any other day, may be purchased for a sum of money, or so much per cent.; that is to say, you may, supposing the price to be 90, have the power to compel a sale or purchase of so much stock at 90*l.* for one-eighth or one-fourth per cent., or for any other sum agreed on between

the parties. In selling 1,000*l.* consols, or any other sum for the account, you may, by submitting to a sacrifice of one-fourth or three-eighths, as the price of the option may have been fixed, acquire the power to compel the purchaser to take as much more, if you please; that is to say, provided it suits your interest in consequence of the fall of prices on the account day; or, in buying, you have in like manner the option, by giving something more for your stock, to call for double the quantity. You may buy at one price to put back at another, or sell at one price to call back at another, thereby fixing the amount of your risk.

By far the greater portion of business transacted in Capel Court is in what are called time bargains. By time bargains is meant, that no actual transfer of the stock ostensibly purchased for the account need take place, but the party purchasing engages to give, should the peculiar stock rise, the party selling any difference between the price at the time of the purchase and what it is on the day fixed for adjusting the

matter. The seller, on the other hand, comes under a similar engagement, to give the buyer any difference in price should there be a rise in the value of such stock.

There are eight account days in the year when time bargains between the members are adjusted. They are usually Thursday or Friday. The Saturday is never fixed on; first, because that is not a transfer day at the Bank, and, secondly, because the day immediately following is always settling day, which could not be the case were Saturday the account day. In the foreign Stock Exchange, the settling day occurs twice in each month.

I have before mentioned, that when a member fails to fulfil his engagements his name is placarded on a black board as a "defaulter." This is looked on as a rather genteel name: the most common designation of such a person among the members is, that he is a "lame duck."

Every one who has read the city intelligence of any newspaper must have often encountered

the words "Bulls" and "Bears." The "Bulls" are those who have to take more stock than they can pay for, and who therefore want to get rid of it; and the "Bears" are those who are engaged to deliver more stock than they can deliver at the price agreed for, with safety to themselves. The reader must also have observed it occasionally stated in the public journals, that great efforts were making in the money market to make the account a "Bull" account, or a "Bear" account, just as the case happens to be. That simply means, that the class of persons represented by either of the above animals were doing all in their power so to influence the market as to make the prices, on settling day, most favourable to themselves. With this view all sorts of rumours are set afloat. The number of fibs hatched and industriously circulated in Capel Court, on such occasions, exceeds all credibility. Had Baron Munchausen ever been on the Stock Exchange, he would have been ashamed of his own inventive powers. Ferdi-

nand Mentez Pinto was but a mere type of some persons in the money market, when they have a sufficient inducement to put their inventive capabilities to the test.

The members of the Stock Exchange consist of three distinct classes. The first class are called jobbers. The jobber is a person who is always found in his place from the opening to the closing of the Stock Exchange, except when he has to cross over to the Bank for transfers; and who is at all times ready to buy or sell stock, for what, in technical language, is called the turn of the market, the meaning of which I will give presently. The jobbers are subdivided into sections. There is the consol jobber, the four per cent. jobber, the long annuity jobber, and the jobber in exchequer bills, India stock, India bonds, &c. With the exception of the consol jobber, all the others, unless in peculiar circumstances, as, for example, when the particular stock is short, do business for ready money. The consol jobber also does

business for regular transfer, or in other words, for ready money; but by far the greater part of the business done in consols is for time, and the transaction is consequently called a time bargain. By this is meant a bargain for the price of consols, either at the ensuing account or settling day, or some other day agreed on.

The second class of members are called brokers. These are persons who are employed by parties out of doors to buy or sell a certain amount of stock for them, either in the shape of money or time bargains, as the case may be. The broker so empowered to act goes into the house, and advancing towards the jobber accosts him with "Well, what are they?" meaning, of course, the price of consols. The jobber replies, they are so-and-so, say 90—90⅛, which means he will give 90*l.* for 100*l.* stock, or he will sell at 90-2-6 for 100*l.* stock. The broker says, "I will take them," or "You shall have them," just as he is instructed to buy or sell. Should, however, the quantity of stock be large, the broker must name the amount.

Otherwise, the jobber, not liking perhaps either to sell or buy a large quantity at that particular time, would decline being "saddled" as it is termed, with so much, and would back out of the bargain with only 1000*l.*,—there being a law in the house which protects any jobber or broker from either receiving or disposing of more than that quantity, in all cases where, at the time of making the bargain, the precise amount was not specified by the broker. The broker's business would, without such specification, be thus exposed, and probably the result would be that before he could execute his commission, he would have to submit to a sacrifice of one-eighth or one-fourth per cent.* The broker, therefore,

* It is not unusual, when a large operation is ordered, for the broker to call one of the leading jobbers aside, and offer him a "turn" of one-fourth or three-eighths per cent., provided he will undertake the whole transaction. In this way the business is done quietly and at the jobber's leisure, according as the market will bear it. If a broker were, by hovering about the market or otherwise, to suffer his object to transpire, the prices would be necessarily driven up or down, and thus he would suffer for his indiscretion.

takes care to name the amount he wishes either to sell or purchase.

The usual rate of remuneration which a broker receives for transacting business for a customer is one-eighth per cent., or half a crown for every 100*l.* of stock which he buys or sells. This, however, is not the commission invariably charged by brokers. In extensive transactions the broker seldom gets more than one-sixteenth per cent. or one-thirty-second on what is called "one side the account."

As soon as a broker has completed his business, whether for time or money, he is expected to hand to his constituent, or "principal," to use the phraseology of the Stock Exchange, a contract containing the price or prices, and name or names of the jobber or jobbers with whom the transaction has been done. By observing this regulation he exempts himself from all liability in case of the failure of the jobbers.

The third class of members of the Stock Exchange are the speculators. These are parties who buy or sell on their own account; and

who only "operates" when he conceives the market is in a condition for his doing so to advantage. Most of the transactions on the Stock Exchange may be said to be a species of gambling on a large scale; but the speculator is a gambler in a peculiarly emphatic sense. He who throws the dice is not more so, though there be a difference in the modes of gambling. And, perhaps, of the two modes, that of casting the dice is entitled to the preference. As regards the individual's own feelings, it certainly is so: for the gambler in Crockford's, the Berkeley, or the Cercle, either loses or gains at once, and is thus spared the agonies of suspense; while, in the case of the Stock Exchange gambler, he has to endure all the horrors of suspense—and what horror can be greater, where a man's all perhaps is at stake?—for some weeks at a time. I have heard of speculators in Capel Court whose feelings have undergone such a constant and violent alternation of hope and fear, that they have not enjoyed one hour's regular sleep for fourteen consecutive

nights, but have tossed themselves about on their beds as if they had been suffering under severe physical fever.

Defaulters in the case of time bargains cannot be proceeded against by law, the transactions being, as just remarked, illegal. Hence the peculiar stringency of the rules by which the admission and continuance of members are regulated. Notwithstanding, however, the rules and regulations of the Stock Exchange, desperate characters not unfrequently find their way into it. Many of the most extensive and inveterate speculators have not a farthing in their pocket. They are mere adventurers: they are desperate men and act on desperate principles. Their maxim is, "neck or nothing." If the transaction turns out favourable, good; if not, the parties dealing with them suffer. It is not many months since a defaulter who could not command five pounds in the world, was at one time a purchaser of stock to the amount of nearly 200,000*l.* A common trick among these speculators on the Stock Exchange is, to enter their

stock in fictitious names, as if avowedly purchased for themselves, it would necessarily create suspicion, and consequently put an end to their opportunities of speculating.

From the observations and statements which have already been made, it will at once be inferred that the Stock Exchange is by no means remarkable for its morality. A member failing and giving up his last farthing to his creditors, is not, by at least a large proportion of the other members, thought so favourably of as he who takes care to make a reserve for himself. While the latter steps at once into business again, and obtains credit on effecting an adjustment of his affairs, the former has to struggle hard before he can get begun anew. A member is sometimes blamed, and his credit often suffers, because he does not make a stand when an account goes against him and he is known to have a large sum to pay. An instance of this occurred some time ago. A person who used to go among the members by a name which I will not mention, and who had been supposed to act on

the market for a party connected with a large newspaper establishment,—lost on one account 10,000*l*. He paid the amount without a murmur; but lost his credit from that moment, and never afterwards recovered it; for it was thought the payment of so large a sum must have broken his back, he being, in Stock Exchange phraseology, but a "little man," that is to say, of but moderate means.

But a still more striking and very interesting illustration of the estimation in which sterling integrity is held among a large proportion of the members, was afforded in the case of the late Mr. L. A. de la Chaumette, a gentleman of foreign extraction. He had previously been in the Manchester trade, but had been unfortunate. Being a man much respected, and extensively connected, his friends advised him to go on the Stock Exchange. He adopted their advice, and became a member. He at once established an excellent business as a broker. Not only did he make large sums in the shape of commissions, on the transactions in which he was

employed by others, but one of the largest mercantile houses in London having the highest possible opinion of his judgment and integrity, intrusted him with the sole disposal of an immense sum of money belonging to the French refugees, which was in their hands at the time. He contrived to employ this money so advantageously, both to his constituents and to himself, that he acquired a handsome fortune. Before he had been a member three years, he invited his creditors to dine with him on a particular day, at the London Tavern; but concealed from them the particular object he had in view in so doing. On entering the room, they severally found their own names on the different plates, which were reversed, and on turning them up, each found a cheque for the amount due to him, with interest. The entire sum which Mr. L. A. de la Chaumette paid away on this occasion, and in this manner, was upwards of 30,000*l.* Next day he went into the house as usual; and such was the feeling entertained of his conduct, that many members refused to do a bargain

with him to the extent of a single thousand. They looked on his payment of the claims of his former creditors as a foolish affair, and fancied that possibly he might have exhausted his resources, never dreaming that, even if he had, a man of such honourable feeling and upright principle was worthy of credit to any amount. He eventually died worth upwards of 500,000*l.*

Friendship is a thing almost wholly unknown on the Stock Exchange. The instant a man fails, no matter how fair and honest may have been all his transactions, he is deserted by those who professed the greatest attachment to him before. He is, with very few exceptions, cut by them in the streets as soon as his failure is known, though they may have fawned on him like so many spaniels so long as he was supposed to be a man in easy circumstances. In the few instances in which he may be treated with a little outward civility, it will almost invariably be found that it is when they suppose the hapless victim has not been fleeced of his all; but that something more may yet be got

by good management. In that case no effort is left untried to extract his last shilling from him. When a man has been unfortunate, and it is thought that something more may still be obtained, the creditors propose, to use the language of the house, "to draw his teeth." If he resist, his name is clapped on the black-board, of which I have spoken in a former part of the chapter.* There are doubtless some honourable exceptions, as before observed, to this mode of treating unfortunate members, but, as just stated, they are comparatively few indeed.

One would suppose that where so much important business is transacted, as at the Stock Exchange, and where the parties transacting it must be assumed, both from their education and standing in society, to be gentlemen, that all the proceedings in the place would be characterised by a becoming dignity of demeanour on the

* This is done in the hope that the relations of the party will come forward with a sum of money to assist him, which they sometimes do to avoid the disgrace which, through him, they conceive to be entailed on themselves.

part of the members. Never was there a supposition more opposite to the fact. A more uproarious scene was never witnessed than that which is continually exhibited on the Stock Exchange during the hours of business. Many of the members appear like so many grown-up school-boys engaged in every kind of pastime. You are furnished with some slight earnest of what you may expect when you get into "the house," as it is called, as soon as you enter Capel Court. There you see the members hallooing at each other, and occasionally seizing one another by the breast of the coat, or any other part of one's clothes which is most convenient at the time. Advance a little further; enter the lobby, if that be the right name of the place, and your ears will be regaled by all manner of sounds, and the forms of members will flit before your eyes in their exits and their entrances, with all the celerity, and sometimes exhibiting all the varied evolutions, of so many harlequins. There stands, on an eminence of a foot or so in height, and decked out in a sort of official livery, a poor fellow whose sole occupa-

tion it is to sing out, as he himself expresses it, through a sort of fixture speaking-pipe, the names of those "gentlemen of the Stock Exchange"—another favourite phrase of their own—whom strangers may wish to see. Perhaps a more laborious task than this servant of the house has to perform, has seldom fallen to the lot of mortals. Only imagine him bellowing out, at the full stretch of his voice, for six consecutive hours, and scarcely with a moment's intermission, the names of the members whom "the public"—for that is the distinction in this case—may wish to converse with. To be sure, he does the thing as unceremoniously as possible, and with a good deal of the independence of manner usually ascribed to the Yankee character; for he never troubles himself by pronouncing the christian name of the party wanted. He deems it enough for him, and so it is in all conscience, to call the simple surname of the party. If, for example, Mr. John Arthur Robinson be the person to be called out, the door-keeper inserts his mouth

into the circular sheet-iron article made for its reception, and bawls out "Robinson,"—thus not only in the spirit of true republican equality dispensing with the honorary prefix of "Mr." but also with the christian "John" and "Arthur." The name of the party thus applied for is echoed by another servant, who is privileged to take his station in the inside. The noise is always so great as to render it impossible for the voice of the first person to be heard even the short distance of three or four yards in the inside; and were not he of the interior blessed with lungs of such extraordinary capabilities as to entitle him to the name of a second Stentor, even his voice would be drowned amidst the loud and everlasting noise, I had almost said Niagarian roar, of the place.

Some years ago, a wag took it into his head to exclaim in Drury Lane theatre, as loud as he could, "Mr. Smith, your house is on fire." The name was then, as now, so common, that it is said half the persons in the pit, all rejoicing in the patronimic, and each fancying himself to

be the particular individual apostrophised, rushed out of the theatre in breathless haste. A similar scene, though on a smaller scale, is often to be witnessed at the Stock Exchange. When a particular name is called, there is an immediate rush to the lobby-door, of persons who glory in that name, each of them supposing himself to be the person wanted. Various names are very general on the Stock Exchange.

I have already alluded to the deafening noise and uproar which prevail in the interior of the house, and of which the stranger has had some foretaste given him before he crosses its portals. I know of nothing which could give a better idea of the scene, than to compare it to that which is occasionally exhibited, though of course on a much smaller scale, by the boys of the newsmen, opposite the Courier Office. There you see the venders of the broad sheet all in motion on the pavement, and singing out in most discordant sounds, "A *Toimes!* Who wants a *Toimes?*" "A *'Eral* here! Who's for a *'Eral?*"

"A *Cron*, a *Cron*, a *Cron!* Does any one want a *clean Cron?*" "A *Post* and *'Tiser!* Who'll have a *Post* or *'Tiser?*" In the Stock Exchange there is the same sort of bustle and noise, though on a much larger scale, and with this difference, that instead of your ears being dunned by the imperfectly pronounced names of the morning papers, they are assailed with the everlasting sounds of "Consols," "Reduced"* (Annuities,) "Omnium," "French" (Rentes,) "Spanish" (Bonds,) "Per cents.," of every description, "Exchequer," (Bills) &c. &c. The first impression of a stranger on entering the Stock Exchange, were he not previously otherwise informed, would naturally be, that instead of being met to transact important business, they had assembled for the express purpose of having a little fun and frolic together. You not only hear them uttering, in addition to the sounds

* The members are very partial to an abbreviated mode of speaking, and, therefore, when speaking of Reduced Annuities, &c. they content themselves with the first word.

just alluded to, all other sorts of sounds, some of which partake a good deal of the zoological character, but you see a large proportion of them playing all manner of tricks at each other's expense. One of the most approved of these tricks, if we are to judge from the extent to which it is practised, is that of knocking one's hat down over one's eyes. This pastime, I believe they call "eclipsing," or "bonnetting." If the hat only goes down so far as not to prevent altogether the use of one's luminaries, it is, I presume, called a partial eclipse; but when the application of one's hand to the crown of the hat is given with such vigour as to force it down over the optics of the party who chances to be at the time the person played on, it is called a total eclipse. How far it can be so called with propriety, is at least a debatable point; for I have been assured by those who have undergone the somewhat unpleasant experiment of eclipsing, that if they saw nothing else, the severity and suddenness of "the whack," to use Stock Exchange phraseology, has made

them see stars innumerable. How many crowns of "best beavers" have been so completely "knocked in," as to render the hats ever afterwards unwearable, by means of the process of eclipsing, is, I suspect, a question which the most skilful calculator in the house would not undertake to decide. The cases from first to last of the destruction of hats in this way, must be innumerable; but the ingenuity of some of the members has discovered other means of assisting the hatters, where the eclipsing plan fails of effect. The members in question are remarkably expert at knocking the hats of other members off their heads altogether, and then kicking them about on the floor until they are shattered to pieces. So marked indeed are the hat-destroying propensities of some of the members, that a stranger would come away with the impression, that they were in the pay of the leading city hat manufacturers. Query— Are they so?

The dexterity which many of the members have acquired from long practice, at playing all

manner of tricks with the hats of each other, is really surprising, and would, were they inclined to accept it, procure them an engagement at any of the theatres. By wetting the fore-part of their fingers, and applying them to the hat of the party to be operated on, they, unconsciously to him, can make it let go its hold of his head; and then, before it has quitted his cranium entirely, they give it another "touch," as they call it, with the aforesaid fore-part of their fingers, which sends it spinning through the place a distance perhaps of forty or fifty feet.

There are various other pastimes which are daily practised on the Stock Exchange, besides those I have mentioned. Occasionally you will see walking-canes, umbrellas, &c. moving about through the place, to the imminent hazard of the heads of members. Chalking one another's backs is one of their most harmless expedients, when in a larking humour. The figures sometimes made on these occasions are of so odd a character, as to be equally beyond the

pale of Euclid's mathematics, and the tailorifics of any German knight of the thimble, or any other distinguished professor of the "fitting" art. It is scarcely necessary to say that when a person's back is thus well chalked he cuts a very odd figure. Not long ago, two of the gentlemen of the house mutually chalked each other's back with every conceivable variety of stroke, without the one knowing that the other had been playing any of his old tricks. The other gents, or at least that portion of them who most keenly relish a little frolic, had, of course, their laugh at the expense of both parties, while they individually richly enjoyed the affair, thinking they had achieved a wonderful exploit in having got through the chalking process without the party chalked being aware of the trick that had been played him. When others looked into their faces and laughed heartily, they each fancied it was in the way of giving them credit for their dexterity, and congratulated themselves accordingly. Little did either suppose the other gentlemen were

laughing *at*, instead of *with*, them. But perhaps the most amusing part of the affair, was that of the two chalked parties laughing most immoderately at each other, and winking at the other gentlemen around them, by way of self-gratulation at the ridiculous figure the one had been the means of making the other look. When the discovery was made of how they had tricked each other, both were mortified and crest-fallen in the greatest degree.

On particular days the more frolicsome gentlemen of the Stock Exchange have particular amusements. The 5th of November is a great day for fun amongst them. I am not aware that, like the boys in the streets, they dress up a Guy Fawkes for the occasion. If "Guy" has ever been paraded through the house, I have not heard of the circumstance; but crackers are quite in vogue among them on every anniversary of the escape from the gunpowder-plot. Last 5th of November, the number let off was incredible. Members went with their pockets literally crammed with them, and there was

nothing but an everlasting "rack, rack, rack," from ten till four o'clock. They were flying in every direction; sometimes exploding about members' feet, at other times about their ears and all parts of their bodies. The number of perforations made in the clothes of some of the more unfortunate members was so great, that certain parts of their garments had the appearance of targets. To such an extent was the joke carried as to render it impossible to do any business worthy of the name.

But to see the mischievous larking capabilities of certain gentlemen on the Stock Exchange to advantage, one must be there when a stranger chances to go in amongst the members. It is surprising how keen-scented they are in finding out the hapless intruder; and the moment the discovery is made, and the cry of "Fourteen Hundred"* is heard, they pounce upon him like so many ——, I shall not say

* "Fourteen hundred!" is the exclamation always made when a stranger is discovered. It is a sort of watch-word on the Stock Exchange.

what. He finds himself instantly surrounded, as if he were some criminal of the first magnitude and the parties around him officers of justice commissioned to take him into custody. He looks about him wondering what is the matter, or rather wondering what there can be about him which not only attracts all eyes, but all persons towards him. He has not time, however, to form a conjecture on the subject, when he finds himself eclipsed, not partially but totally. Before he has time to raise his hat, so as again to see the light of heaven which finds its way into the place, he feels some ten or a dozen hands, as if the paws of so many bears, pulling him about in every direction. Possibly he feels them tearing the clothes off his back; and from the rough usage he receives, he very naturally fears they will tear himself in pieces. Many a luckless wight has gone to the Stock Exchange with an excellent coat on his back, and come out with a jacket. To dock an intruder, is, by some of the members, deemed an illustrious exploit. There is one thing, however, to be said

in favour of the parties who chiefly distinguish themselves in this way in Capel Court, which is, that they never have recourse to Lynch law when dealing with the intruder. It is but right also to do them the justice of mentioning, that they never patronise the tarring and feathering process.

Many amusing anecdotes are related of the treatment which strangers have experienced, who have had the misfortune to enter the forbidden place. Not long ago, a friend of my own, ignorant of the rule so rigidly enforced for the expulsion of strangers, chanced to "drop in," as he himself phrased it, to the Stock Exchange. He walked about for nearly a minute without being discovered to be an intruder, indulging in surprise at finding that the greatest uproar and frolic prevailed in a place in which he expected there would be nothing but the strictest order and decorum. All at once a person who had just concluded a hasty but severe scrutiny of his features, sung out at the full stretch of his voice, "Fourteen Hun-

dred!" Then a bevy of the gentlemen of the house surrounded him. "Will you purchase any new navy five per cents,* sir?" said one, looking him eagerly in the face. "I am not ——" The stranger was about to say he was not going to purchase stock of any kind, but was prevented finishing his sentence by his hat being, through a powerful application of some one's hand to its crown, not only forced down over his eyes, but over his mouth also. Before he had time to recover from the stupefaction into which the suddenness and violence of the "eclipse" threw him, he was seized by the shoulders and wheeled about as if he had been a revolving machine. He was then pushed about from one person to another, as if he had only been the effigy of some human being, instead of a human being himself. His hat was all this while down over his face, he having neither presence of mind nor time to restore it to its usual position on his head; but even had

* It is hardly necessary to say that there is no such stock.

it been otherwise, all concern for the hat must have merged in deep anxiety for himself. After tossing and hustling him about in the roughest possible manner, denuding his coat of one of its tails, and tearing into fragments other parts of his wardrobe, they carried him to the door, where, after depositing him on his feet, they left him to recover his lost senses at his leisure. His first feeling on coming to himself again, was one of thankfulness that he had not realised the fate of the frog in the fable which was stoned to death by the boys on the banks of the pond, for no other reason in the world than that of a resolution to gratify their own propensities for pastime. He says he would as soon enter a lion's den, as again cross the threshold of the Stock Exchange.

The "gentlemen of the Stock Exchange," however, do not always maltreat persons with impunity. Sometimes when they least expect it, they catch a tartar. It is not very long since a middle-sized but very powerful man came up to town from Yorkshire. He was

well known in his own neighbourhood for being of such a proud spirit as never to brook an affront. One day he went into the Stock Exchange, in utter ignorance of his transgressing any law, conventional or otherwise. The members seemed to know by instinct that he was an intruder, just as Falstaff knew royalty by the same quality. He had not elbowed his way a few yards into the place, when a chorus of voices shouted out—"Fourteen Hundred!" In a moment, to his unspeakable surprise, the entire contents of the house seemed to him to have planted themselves by his side. Down went his hat before he had time to hazard a conjecture as to the cause of his attracting so many persons around him. In an instant after the descent over his face, of his upper covering, the process of wheeling and hustling his person about, commenced with vigour. The Yorkshire stranger uttered an oath or two, and invoking a nameless doom on himself if he had "coom" from the country to be treated in that way, disengaged his arms from the hold of his tormen-

tors, and distributed sundry heavy blows among them. Acting on the system of the Malays, who when injured in any way run a-muck at the first person they meet, the Yorkshireman did not trouble himself about who were the principal aggressors, but hit about him right and left, and with such marked effect, that in a few seconds he had made a ring for himself of considerable circumference. Still preserving his pugilistic attitude, he then walked slowly out of the place, no one venturing to indulge in any further pastime at his expense. I should mention, that while he was under the eclipse, he seized one of his assailants by his handkerchief, and kept so firm a hold of it that another member was obliged to cut it in two to prevent the unlucky wight from being strangled.

The amount of business sometimes transacted in one day at the Stock Exchange is very great. On some occasions, property, including time bargains, to the amount of 10,000,000*l.* has there changed hands in the short space of a few hours. The late Mr. Rothschild is known to

have made purchases in one day to the extent of 4,000,000*l.* The influence which that great capitalist exercised over the funds may be said to have been omnipotent. He could cause a rise or a fall, to a certain extent, whenever he pleased. He was a singularly skilful tactician. To those who know anything of the Stock Exchange it cannot be necessary to state, that he never went into it himself. That, indeed, would have defeated his objects. Had he transacted his business in the funds in his own person, everybody must have seen what he was doing, and consequently others, knowing his general good fortune, would have sold out when he sold out, and purchased when he purchased. One great cause of his success was the secrecy in which he contrived to shroud all his transactions. He had certain men whom he employed as brokers on ordinary occasions; but whenever it suited his purpose, or when he supposed that by employing them, it would be ascertained that he wished to effect either a rise or a fall, he took care to commission a new set of brokers

to act for him. His mode of doing business, when engaging in large transactions, was this: Supposing he possessed exclusively, which he often did a day or two before it could be generally known, intelligence of some event which had occurred in any part of the continent sufficiently important to cause a rise in the French funds, and through them on the English funds, he would empower the brokers he usually employed to sell out stock, say to the amount of 500,000*l.* The news spread in a moment in Capel Court, that Rothschild was selling out, and a general alarm followed. Every one apprehended he had received intelligence from some foreign part of some important event which would produce a fall in prices. As might, under such circumstances, be expected, all became sellers at once. This of necessity caused the funds, to use Stock Exchange phraseology, "to tumble down at a fearful rate." Next day, when they had fallen, perhaps, one or two per cent., he would make purchases, say to the amount of 1,500,000*l.*; taking care, however, to employ a

number of brokers whom he was not in the habit of employing, and commissioning each to purchase to a certain extent, and giving all of them strict orders to preserve secrecy in the matter. Each of the persons so employed was, by this means, ignorant of the commission given to the others. Had it been known the purchases were made for him, there would have been as great and sudden a rise in the prices as there had been in the fall, so that he could not purchase to the intended extent on such advantageous terms. On the third day, perhaps, the intelligence which had been expected by the jobbers to be unfavourable, arrives, and instead of being so, turns out to be highly favourable. Prices instantaneously rise again; and possibly they may get one and a-half, or even two per cent. higher than they were when he sold out his 500,000*l.* He now sells out at the advanced price the entire 1,500,000*l.* he had purchased at the reduced prices. The gains by such extensive transactions, when so skilfully managed, will be at once seen to be enormous. By the

supposed transaction, assuming the rise to be two per cent., the gain would be 35,000*l.* But this is not the greatest gain which the late leviathan of modern capitalists has made by such transactions. He has on more than one occasion made upwards of 100,000*l.* on one account.

Repeated efforts, but always without effect, and generally to the ruin of the party making them, have been made to overthrow the power of Rothschild in the money market. It was clear that the only way in which this could be done, if it was to be done at all, would be by the party attempting it, engaging in transactions of corresponding magnitude. By far the boldest of these attempts was made some years ago by a young gentleman, a Mr. James H——. He made a number of most extensive purchases, and sold out again to a very large amount, all in a very short period of time; and so far from imitating the conduct of the rival whose empire on the Stock Exchange he sought to subvert, in the secrecy of his transactions, he deemed it essential to the success of his schemes, that his ope-

rations should be performed as openly as possible. Mr. H— was the son of a wealthy country banker, and held, at the time of his introduction, money stock in his own name, though it actually was his father's, to the extent of 50,000*l.* The reputation of being so rich invested him at once with great importance in the house. The 50,000*l.*, after Mr. H—— had been some time a member, was privately re-transferred to his father, the real owner of it. For some time, and until he became perfectly master of the rules and usages of the house, he acted with great prudence and caution, confining his transactions to small amounts; but he eventually began to astonish "the natives,"—for so the members are often called,—by the boldness of his manœuvres. In a very short time he became the dread of all parties: the Bulls and Bears were anxious to follow him; but, like Rothschild, he evinced a disposition to act independently of every person and every party. About this time consols were as high as 96 or 97. In a few months afterwards symptoms of a coming

panic began to manifest themselves; and a well-known writer on money matters, having, at the time, for reasons best known to himself, begun to deal out his fulminations against the Bank of England in an influential newspaper, the unhealthy state of the market was greatly aggravated, though high prices were still maintained. Mr. H—— watched the state of things with great attention; and being satisfied in his own mind that a leader was only wanting to commence and carry on a successful war against Rothschild, he determined himself to become that leader; and it must be admitted that he acquitted himself as an able general. Going into the house one afternoon, he accosted one of the most respectable jobbers thus:

"What are consols?"

"Ninety-six and eight," was the answer.

"In 100,000*l.*?" continued he.

"Yes," said the jobber.

"You have them. 100,000*l.* more?"

"I'll take 100,000*l.* more."

"They are your's."

"Another 100,000*l.*?"

"No; I don't want any more."

On this transaction being finished, the adventurous young gentleman immediately turned round and announced aloud that "200,000*l.* had been done at 96, and more offered." Then walking backward and forwards "like a tiger in a den," he followed up the bold tactics he had commenced, by offering any part of 1,000,000*l.* at 94. For a great part of this amount he at once found purchasers. But he was not yet content with the extent of his transactions, great as they were; nor would he wait for buyers at 94. He offered them, viz. consols, at 93, at 92, and eventually as low as 90, at which price they left off that day. Next day he renewed his exertions to depress the market, and he succeeded to the utmost of his wishes; for consols did not stop in their descent till they reached 74. As was to be expected, contemporaneous with this sudden and extraordinary fall in the price of consols, there was a run on the Bank of England which almost exhausted it of its specie. He

then purchased to so large an extent, that when a re-action took place, he found that his gains exceeded 100,000*l.*

It can scarcely be necessary to say that all eyes were fixed with amazement on the boldness of the young gentleman's operations. Many fancied they saw in those operations the dynasty of Rothschild tottering to its fall. With what feelings the "Jew" himself regarded the adventurous conduct of his new and unexpected rival, no one had an opportunity of knowing; for in nothing was Rothschild more remarkable than in the reserve he maintained on all matters relating to the money market. The rivalry of Mr. H—— was, however, of short duration: he very soon fell a victim to an enterprise which, both in conception and execution evinced much more of the quality of boldness than of judgment. In about two years after the above extensive "operation," he attempted another on a scale of corresponding magnitude; but in this case Rothschild, anticipating the tactics he would adopt, laid a trap for him into which he

fell and became a ruined man. He was declared a defaulter, and his name stuck up on the black board. It was only now that the discovery was made, that the 50,000*l.* money stock supposed to be his own, was in reality his father's, and that it had been re-transferred in his name. A deputation from the committee waited upon Mr. H— immediately after his failure, at his own house in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park, when one of the most rapacious of the number suggested a sale of his furniture, and a mortgage of an annuity settled on his wife. He received the suggestion with the utmost indignation, and ringing the bell for his servant, desired him to show the deputation down stairs, adding that he would be—I shall not say what—before he would pay a sixpence after the treatment he had met with from them. "As for you, you vagabond, 'My son Jack,'* who have had the audacity to make such a proposal to me; as for you,

* The designation by which one of the members always went, his father having been accustomed to speak of him as his "son Jack."

sir, if you don't make haste out of the room I'll pitch you out of the window." It is scarcely necessary to say that "My son Jack," was the first who reached the bottom of the stairs.

But though no person during the last twelve or fifteen years of Rothschild's life was ever able for any length of time to compete with him in the money market, he on several occasions was, in single transactions, outwitted by the superior tactics of others. I will give one instance. In that instance Rothschild had to contend not only with a man of more than ordinary ability, but one in the soundness of whose judgment all who were acquainted intimately with him reposed the most implicit reliance. Hence they, and especially his monied connexions, were ready to follow him in any operation. The gentleman to whom I allude was then and is now the head of one of the largest private banking establishments in town. Abraham Montefiore, Rothschild's brother-in-law, was the principal broker to the great capitalist, and in that capa-

city was commissioned by the latter to negotiate with Mr. —— a loan of 1,500,000*l.* The security offered by Rothschild was a proportionate amount of stock in consols, which were at that time 84. This stock was of course to be transferred to the name of the party advancing the money,—Rothschild's object being to raise the price of consols by carrying so large a quantity out of the market. The money was lent and the conditions of the loan were these—that the interest on the sum advanced should be at the rate of 4½ per cent., and that if the price of consols should chance to go down to 74, Mr. — - should have the right of claiming the stock at 70. The Jew, no doubt, laughed at what he conceived his own commercial dexterity in the transaction; but ere long he had abundant reason to laugh on the wrong side of his mouth; for no sooner was the stock pawned in the hand of the banker, than the latter sold it, along with an immensely large sum which had been previously standing in his name, amounting altogether to little short of 3,000,000*l.*. But even this was not all: Mr.

—— also held powers of attorney from several of the leading Scotch and English banks, as well as from various private individuals who had large property in the funds, to sell stock on their account. On these powers of attorney he acted, and at the same time advised his friends to follow his example. They at once did so; and the consequence was that the aggregate amount of stock sold by himself and his friends conjointly, exceeded 10,000,000*l.* So unusual an extent of sales, all effected in the shortest possible time, necessarily drove down the prices. In an incredibly short time they fell to 74,—immediately on which Mr. —— claimed of Rothschild his stock at 70. The Jew could not refuse; it was in the bond. This climax being reached, the banker bought in again all the stock he had previously sold out, and advised his friends to re-purchase also. They did so, and the result was that in a few weeks consols reached 84 again, their original price, and from that to 86. Rothschild's losses were very great by this transaction; but they

were by no means equal to the banker's gains which could not have been less than 300,000*l* or 400,000*l*.

Since Rothschild's death no one can be said to have taken his place on the Stock Exchange. There are several gentlemen who engage in very large transactions, but they can scarcely be said to approximate in amount to his. Neither do they stand out, as capitalists, with any very great pre-eminence. Rothschild's sons are, of course, severally rich even compared with those who are regarded as among the most affluent; but, then, compared with him, they can only be considered poor, his wealth being divided amongst them. But independently of this, they have neither the spirit of enterprise nor the financial knowledge or skill of their late father.

It is to the transactions of speculators in the funds, such as those I have described in the case of Rothschild, and to others of a smaller amount by less affluent parties, and not to any purchases effected or sales made by the public, that the sudden rise or fall of consols is to be

ascribed. Were the funds left to the operation of the public alone, there would be scarcely any fluctuation in them at all.

The late Abraham Goldsmid, who unfortunately shot himself a good many years ago, used to carry on business to an immense extent on the Stock Exchange. Perhaps the amount of his transactions were never exceeded by that of any man excepting Rothschild himself. He always did his business on the most liberal and honourable terms, and was greatly respected by all who knew him; but his good qualities did not prevent his becoming the victim to a league, I will not call it a conspiracy, entered into by a party against him,—which party some persons have conjectured included some of his own relations, since dead. At the period alluded to, which is more than a quarter of a century since, a practice obtained as it did for some years afterwards, of allowing the King's money as it is called, to accumulate in the hands of the different collectors and receivers throughout the kingdom, till the end of the half year or quarter, when they had to ac-

count for it, sometimes in the funds but more frequently in what are called floating securities, viz. Exchequer Bills and India Bonds. Goldsmid had on one occasion taken, in conjunction with a well-known banking establishment, a large government loan. The party who had combined against poor Goldsmid contrived to produce from these collectors and receivers of the revenue and others so large an amount of these floating securities, that the omnium fell to 18 discount. The results as far as regarded Goldsmid, were in the first instance his failure, and eventually his death by his own hand. The banking house was affected to such an extent by its share of the loss, as to occasion for a time doubts of its solvency. The party referred to took care to purchase largely of omnium when at its greatest discount. On the following day it went up to 3 premium, which was the greatest fluctuation ever known in so short a time. The party were supposed to have cleared among them at least 2,000,000*l.* by the transaction.

Fortunes are lost or gained on the Stock

Exchange with a rapidity unknown in any other place. It is no uncommon thing—it was still less uncommon in the time of the war—for a man to be worth 20,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* one day, and to be a beggar the next. There are also many instances in the annals of the Stock Exchange of parties who could not command a farthing one day, being worth 20,000*l.* 30,000*l.*, 40,000*l*, or 50,000*l.* the next. As illustrative of the sudden and singular vicissitudes of fortune which men sometimes undergo in that place, I may mention a curious instance in the case of Mr. F——, the present proprietor of one of the most extensive estates in the county of Middlesex. He had been for some years a member of the Stock Exchange, when, on becoming unfortunate, he had to suffer the indignity of having his name chalked on the black board; an indignity to which poverty more frequently than dishonourable conduct is subjected. The loss of a handsome fortune, coupled with the treatment he had received from the committee, worked his feelings up to such a state of

frenzy, that chancing to pass London bridge a few days after the battle of Waterloo, he, in his despair, threw the last shilling he had in the world over the bridge into the water. For a few moments afterwards he stood motionless on the spot, leaning over the parapet, and gazing vacantly on the water. The emotions which then passed through his mind were of a nature which no second party could describe; and which, indeed, even he himself could not by possibility convey with anything like their vividness or power, to the minds of others. His predominating feelings—but no idea can be formed of their burning intensity—were those of envy of the insensate stones, and of a wish that he himself were, like his last shilling, at the bottom of the river. That moment, but for the crowds of persons who were passing and repassing, he would have thrown himself over the parapet of the bridge, and ended his woes by ending his existence. From that instant, he did form the purpose of committing suicide; and he began to move slowly towards

home with that view. Before he had reached the other end of the bridge, he was met by a Frenchman with whom he had been on terms of great intimacy. He would have passed by the Frenchman, so absorbed was he with the wretchedness of his condition, without recognising him. The latter, however, advancing towards Mr. F——, seized him by the hand and inquired how he was. He managed to lisp out an "O, how are you?"

"This is a most important affair to both countries," said the Frenchman.

"What affair?" inquired the other, partially recovering himself from the frightful reverie to which he had been giving way.

"Why, the great battle," observed Monsieur.

"The great battle! What great battle?"

"The battle of Waterloo."

"You are surely dreaming. I have not heard a word about it: the newspapers make no mention of any battle having been lately fought."

"I dare say they do not. How could they?

Intelligence of it has only reached town within the last two hours. The foreign secretary and the French ambassador alone know anything of it. Government have received the tidings of it by telegraph: it is not an hour since I parted with the French ambassador from whom I had the information. Napoleon is signally defeated."

Mr. F—— felt as if he had started from a deep sleep. He felt as if he had become a new man. The advantage to which such important intelligence might be turned on the Stock Exchange, the scene of so many disasters and so much degradation to him, immediately shot across his mind.

"And the battle was an important one?"

"*Most* important," said the Frenchman, with great emphasis. "It will prove fatal for ever to the prospects of Bonaparte. His usurpation is at an end," he added, with evident joy, being a great adherent of the Bourbon family."

"Were the numbers on either side great?"

"I have no idea of the exact numbers, but

the battle was the greatest which has been fought in modern times, and it lasted a considerable part of three days."

Mr. F—— cordially shook the Frenchman by the hand, and said he would call on him in a day or two. Hastily returning to the city, he hurried to a certain firm on the Stock Exchange, informed them that he had just become exclusively possessed of most important information, and expressed his readiness to communicate it to them on condition that he should receive the half of whatever profits they might realise on any operation they might have in the Stock Exchange in consequence of that information. They agreed to his proposal: he told them the result of the battle of Waterloo: they rushed into the market and purchased consols to an enormous amount. In the meantime Mr. F— proceeded to another large house and told them also that he possessed information of the most important character, of which he was sure they had heard nothing. They admitted they knew of nothing that was not in the public

prints. He made the same proposal to them he had done to the other firm: they also, not supposing Mr. F— had spoken to any other party on the subject, at once closed with the offer, and on the intelligence being communicated to them, one of the partners called the other aside —there were only two in the counting-house at the time—and whispered to him, not on any account to let Mr. F— out of his sight, lest he should allow the important intelligence to transpire to some one else,—adding that he would that instant hurry to the Stock Exchange and employ various brokers to purchase consols to a large amount. "You'll recollect what I have said," he observed to his partner, as he hastened out of the counting-house. "I'll take special care of that," said the other. "Leave such matters to me," he added in his own mind. A thought struck him. "Mr.F—, will you just step into the parlour," pointing the way, "and have a lunch?" Mr. F— assented. They both proceeded to an apartment in another part of the house. A lunch was brought. Mr. F—, whose

state of mind had deprived him of all appetite for some days past, now ate rather heartily. While busy with the things set before him, the other, rising from his seat, said, "You'll excuse me for a moment, Mr. F—, while I transact a small matter in the counting-house." "Certainly," said Mr. F—, "take your time." The other quitted the room, and on getting to the outside, locked the door, unknown to Mr. F—, and put the key in his pocket. In about half an hour the first partner returned from the Stock Exchange and stated, that the funds had already, from some cause or other, risen in an hour or two three per cent. The cause, it is unnecessary to say, was the immense amount of consols which had been purchased by the first house to whom Mr. F— gave the information. Both partners proceeded to the apartment in which they had shut up their prisoner, and apprised him of the rise which had taken place, adding that they did not think it advisable to purchase at the advanced price. He urged them to do so, expressing his firm belief that when the news of so im-

portant a victory by the Allied Powers had been received, the funds would rise at least 10 or 12 per cent. The parties acted on his advice, and made immense purchases. The event justified the soundness of Mr. F—'s counsel, and the accuracy of his opinion; for on the day on which intelligence of the battle was made general, the funds rose to the amazing extent of 15 per cent.,—. which is the greatest rise they were ever known to experience. Mr. F—'s share of the profits between the two houses in one day exceeded 100,000*l.* He returned next day to the Stock Exchange, and very soon amassed a large fortune, when he had the wisdom to quit the place for ever, and went and purchased the estate I have alluded to, which he still possesses.

The funds experienced a greater fluctuation as well as greater rise on the day on which the result of the battle of Waterloo was made known than they ever did at any previous or subsequent period. The average rise in the course of the day, as just stated, was fifteen per cent.; but taking all their different variations, up and

down, and down and up together, the fluctuation was fully 100 per cent.

It can scarcely be necessary to say, that during the time of the war the fluctuations of the funds were much greater than they have been since the peace. The news of every succeeding battle sent them up, or drove them down, according as the result of such battle was supposed likely to affect this country. As might have been expected, all sorts of rumours as to new battles were got up to serve the purposes of individuals. Many a battle was fought and many a victory gained and lost on the Stock Exchange, which were never heard of anywhere else. So accustomed, indeed, had the members become to false intelligence in one or two of the leading papers, given with all the solemnity and positiveness of truth, that they frequently found themselves in the predicament of the persons who had been so often groundlessly alarmed by the cry of 'Wolf' from the shepherd's boy, that they did not believe it when true. On one occasion a blunt honest member, who had an

immense stake depending on the aspect of the war on the continent, having heard a rumour that a certain battle had taken place, but not knowing whether to credit it or not, determined on waiting personally on Lord Castlereagh, then foreign minister, with the view of endeavouring to get at the truth. He sent up his name to his lordship, with a note stating the liberty he had taken in consequence of the amount he had at stake, and begging as a favour to be informed whether the news of the battle in question was true. The noble lord desired the gentleman to be sent up stairs. He was shown into his lordship's room. "Well, sir," said his lordship, "I am happy to inform you that it is perfectly true this great battle has been fought, and that the British troops have been again victorious."

"I am exceedingly obliged to your lordship for your kindness in giving me the information: I am a ruined man," said the Stock Exchange speculator, making a low bow and withdrawing. He had calculated on the triumph, at the next conflict, of Napoleon's army. He had speculated

accordingly; a contrary issue at once rendered him a beggar.

The members of the Stock Exchange are for the most part exceedingly ignorant of all other matters except those which immediately bear on their own business. This may be accounted for, partly from the fact of many of them being of an humble origin, and but very imperfectly educated; and partly from the fact, that when they have once entered the place, their minds, as in the case of the gamblers at the west end, become so engrossed with the everlasting subject of "stock," that they not only never talk but scarcely ever think of anything else. As for *doing*, again, the only actions a great many of them are ever known to perform are those of smoking tobacco and playing at billiards at night. There are some most inveterate smokers among them: the cigar is scarcely ever out of their mouths. It is an article which must cost many of them a very handsome something in the course of a year.

I have said that there are some excellent men

on the Stock Exchange who would be incapable of anything oppressive or vindictive towards a fallen member. I could mention the names of persons in the house who are an honour to their species. The late Mr. Goldsmid had many admirable moral qualities about him. For many years he had been accustomed to dine in a plain and simple way, at the London Tavern, or City of London Tavern—I am not certain which—when he was usually served by the same waiter. The waiter had always been remarkable for his civility and attention. One day Mr. Goldsmid observed that he was very inattentive and seemingly absent-minded. "What's the matter with you to day, John?" inquired Mr. Goldsmid, just as he was about to quit the house.

"Nothing, sir; that is to say, sir, nothing very particular," observed John, in faltering accents.

Mr. Goldsmid was strengthened in his conviction by the waiter's confused manner of speaking, that something particular *was* the matter.

"Come, come, John, do tell me what makes you so absent-minded and unhappy like?" said Mr. Goldsmid.

"Well, Mr. Goldsmid, since you are so pressing in your kind inquiries, I am sorry to say that about half an hour ago I was arrested for debt, and must go to prison this evening if I cannot pay the money."

"Arrested for debt, John! What induces you to get into debt?"

"Why, sir, to tell the truth, I am not able to support my wife and five children with what I can make in this house," said the waiter, in very touching tones.

"And what may be the amount for which you are arrested?"

"I am ashamed to mention it, sir."

"Let me hear it," said Mr. Goldsmid.

"Why, sir, it's for 55*l.*," stammered out the waiter, in broken accents, looking stedfastly on the floor as if ashamed to hold up his head.

"Bring me a pen and ink," said Mr. Goldsmid. A pen and ink was immediately brought,

when Mr. Goldsmid drew from his pocket his check-book, and having written a check for 100*l.*, put it into the poor fellow's hands, saying, "Here, go with that, John, to my banker's, and you will get as much for it as will pay your debt, and be a few pounds to your family beside."

I may mention another short anecdote illustrative of the excellence of Mr. Goldsmid's heart. It must make every one regret the unhappy end to which he came. Being on one occasion travelling in Somersetshire, his carriage was violently upset, owing to the horses taking fright, and he himself seriously hurt by the accident. He was taken to the house of a poor curate, at no great distance from the place at which the disaster occurred. There he was confined to his bed, from the injuries he had received, for a fortnight, during which time the curate was most marked and unremitting in his attentions. On recovering so far as to be able to undertake a journey to London, he asked the curate how much he was indebted to him for

the very great kindnesses he had received at his hand. The curate begged him not to mention such a thing: the idea of remuneration in such a case never entered his mind. Mr. Goldsmid, thinking after this that to press money on the good Samaritan's acceptance, would only hurt his feelings—happy were it for the church were all her clergy like him—quitted his humble and hospitable abode, assuring him that his humanity would not be forgotten. In six weeks afterwards the poor curate received a letter from Mr. Goldsmid, telling him that he had become the contractor for a large government loan, and that he had put down his (the curate's) name for 20,000*l.* omnium, which he hoped would turn out for his advantage. The simple-minded curate, who knew nothing more of the funds or of omnium, than he did of the Stock Exchange of the Georgium Sidus, if there be such a place in that planet,—fancied that as his name had been put down for a 20,000*l.* slice of the loan, it would be indispensable that that amount of money should be forthcoming. He

immediately wrote back to Mr. Goldsmid, thanking him for the kindness of his intentions, but adding, that instead of being able to raise 20,000*l.* he could not command 20*l.* in the world. Mr. Goldsmid answered the virtuous curate's letter by the post of next day, saying, that the 20,000*l.* could be dispensed with, and enclosing him 1,500*l.* as the amount of profit which he had received for the 20,000*l.* omnium, on selling it out,—the premium having risen since he had put down the curate's name, to an extent which cleared that sum.

Most of the leading men in the Stock Exchange go by nick-names. The way in which these names sometimes originate is curious. "My son Jack," a member already referred to, is a cognomen which dates its origin from the circumstance of the party's father having always called him by that name. Another member is dubbed "The Lady's Broker," in consequence of having been employed, on one occasion, by Mrs. R., the lady of a deceased capitalist, in a speculation into which she entered on her own

account, and without the knowledge of her husband. The speculation turned out so unfavourably that neither the lady nor her broker could discharge their obligations; and hence, as in other cases where the broker cannot meet the engagements he has entered into for any other party, he must, to save himself from the black board, give up the name of his principal,—the broker was compelled to divulge the name of the lady speculator. From that day to this he has gone under the name of "The Lady's Broker." The husband, knowing he could not be compelled to pay for the illegal gambling of his wife, refused to advance a farthing in liquidation of her debts. Every-one, however, is not so frightened at the idea of having his name clapped on the black board as was the member in question.

It is worthy of observation, that with the single exception of the late Mr. David Ricardo, the celebrated political economist, there are no names, so far as I am aware, of any literary distinction connected with the Stock Exchange.

I know several members who have written pamphlets; but they have been on matters connected with their own business. Whether this absence of literary reputation on the Stock Exchange is to be ascribed to the engrossing nature of the transactions in which the members are engaged, is a point which I cannot undertake positively to determine, though I incline to the opinion that it is so in a great measure, if not wholly. As I have mentioned the name of Mr. Ricardo, I may observe that he amassed his immense fortune by a scrupulous attention to what he called his own three golden rules, the observance of which he used to press on his private friends. These were, "Never refuse an option* when you can get it,"—"Cut short your losses,"—"Let your profits run on." By cutting short one's losses, Mr. Ricardo meant that when a member had made a purchase of stock, and prices were falling, he ought to resell immediately. And by letting one's profits run on he meant, that when a member possessed stock, and prices

* This technicality has been already explained.

were rising, he ought not to sell until prices had reached their highest, and were beginning again to fall. These are, indeed, golden rules, and may be applied with advantage to innumerable other transactions than those connected with the Stock Exchange.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

Historical sketch and description of—Number of persons who visit it in a day—Business done in it—Supposed wealth of persons attending it—The late Mr. Rothschild—General observations—Negotiation of bills of exchange—The subject of exchanges explained.

The Royal Exchange is a phrase with which everybody is familiar. It is one which is hardly ever out of the mouths of some of the city merchants. By many in the country it is confounded with the Stock Exchange. It will be afterwards seen that the two are wholly distinct from each other. The Royal Exchange is close to the Bank of England, and also to the Stock Ex-

change. You have only to walk a few yards in going from either of the three places to the other. It may be worth mentioning for the information of those unacquainted with the localities of the metropolis, that the Mansion House is also in the immediate neighbourhood. These four places are so near each other, that one might visit all of them in less than two minutes.

I shall afterwards have occasion to speak to of the present Royal Exchange, viewed merely as an architectural edifice. The first Royal Exchange, or Burse, as it was then called, owed its origin to the munificence of Sir Thomas Gresham. The idea, however, was not his own; it was suggested to him, if our antiquarians may be credited, by Richard Clough, who had been Sir Thomas's leading clerk, and who was eventually knighted and made his representative at Antwerp,—the latter city being then the great commercial emporium of Europe. Sir Thomas first gave public intimation of his intention to build the "Burse" in 1564. He laid the foundation-stone on the 11th of June, 1566,

and the building was finished in 1577. In three years afterwards, it was visited in state by Queen Elizabeth, who caused the "Burse" to be proclaimed by herald and trumpet, "The Royal Exchange." The edifice was erected at the sole expense of Sir Thomas, but the city of London purchased and presented him with the ground, and cleared away the buildings which stood on it, at an expense of 4,000*l*. The object which the founder of the institution proposed to himself, was to have an Exchange, with large and covered walks, wherein the merchants and traders of the city of London might daily assemble and transact business, in all seasons, without interruption from the weather, or impediments of any kind. Previous to the erection of the Royal Exchange the merchants were in the habit of meeting in the open air in Lombard Street, where they suffered many inconveniences, not only from the variableness of the weather, but from the intrusion of pedestrians along the thoroughfares, and of vehicles of every kind. Sir Thomas Gresham died in 1579, leaving the

building, with the shops, cellars, vaults, &c., belonging to it, to the corporation of London and the company of mercers, but providing that four professors, of divinity, astronomy, music, and geometry, should be appointed, at a yearly salary of 100*l.* each, to deliver gratuitous lectures in one of the rooms of the place. These professorships were kept up till 1830, when they were transferred to the London Institution, no one scarcely ever attending the lectures. It is said that the largest audience which ever honoured either of the professors with their presence during the delivery of their lectures, for many years previous to the time they were given up, consisted of three individuals.

What the peculiar style of architecture, or the extent of the first building may have been, I have not been able to learn. It was destroyed by the great fire in 1666. That the edifice must have been handsome, may be inferred from a casual remark made by the Rev. Thomas Vincent, a well-known evangelical divine of that period, in a work which he published imme-

diately after that destructive conflagration. "No stately building," says Mr. Vincent, "was so great as to resist the fury of the flames. The Royal Exchange itself, the glory of merchants, is now invaded with much violence. When the fire was entered, how quickly did it run round the galleries, filling them with flames; then descending the stairs, compasseth the walks, giving forth flaming vollies, and filling the courts with sheets of fire. By and by the kings fell all down upon their faces*, and, the greatest part of the building after them (the founder's statue only remaining) with such a noise as was dreadful and astonishing."

Mr. Bayley, in his "Reminiscences of London," gives another very interesting quotation from "Meditations on the Burning of London," by the Rev. Samuel Rolle, also a clergyman of that period,—which clearly shows that the Royal Exchange must have been an edifice

* By this is evidently meant, the statues of the Kings of England, which ornamented the building.

of great magnificence, as well as a place of great resort. "What a princely foundation," says he, "was the Royal Exchange! and of how great use! Was not that the centre in which those lines met, which were drawn from all parts of Europe? Rich merchants, I mean, and other eminent tradesmen and great dealers, not only English, but Spanish, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Danes, and Swedes. Was not the place a little epitome, or rather representative, of all Europe (if not of the greatest part of the trading world) renewed every day, at such a time, and for so many hours? As London was the glory of England, so was the Royal Exchange one of the greatest glories and ornaments of London. There were the statues of the Kings and Queens of England set up in the most conspicuous and honourable places, as well receiving lustre from the place where they stood, as giving lustre to it."

The rev. author proceeds in a quaint but forcible manner, to indulge in reflections on the subject:—"How full of riches was that Royal Exchange! Rich men in the midst of it, rich

goods above and beneath! There were men walked upon the top of a wealthy mine; considering what eastern treasures, costly spices, and such things were laid up in the bowels (I mean the cellars) of that place. As for the upper part, was it not the great storehouse whence the nobility and gentry of England were furnished with most of those costly things wherewith they did adorn themselves? Here, if anywhere, might a man have seen the glory of the world in a moment. What artificial thing could entertain the senses and fantasies of men that was not there to be had? Such was the delight that many gallants took in the magazine of all curious varieties, that they could almost have dwelt there; going from shop to shop, like bees from flower to flower,—if they had had but a fountain of money, that could not have been drawn dry! I doubt not but a Mahometan, who never expects more than sensual delights, would gladly have accepted of that place and the treasures of it, for his heaven, and have thought there were none like it. The sins of the lower part, where

merchants met to discourse their affairs, we may suspect to have been craft and covetousness, over-reaching and going beyond one another. And were there not other kinds of sins which did abound in the upper region of that Exchange, which like so many comets or blazing stars did portend or threaten the destruction of it? Oh! the pride and prodigality that were there to be seen! How few could be charitable that were so expensive as many were in that place! And how much of that that was there expended, might well have been put to charitable uses! How likely was it that they should be humble who were so curious and phantastical as the things that were bought showed them to be! They that worked for that place had need of as good a phantasie for metamorphosis in habits as Ovid had in other things, that they might please customers so unsatiable after novelties.

"Though there was in that place an insurance office, which undertook for those ships and goods that were hazarded at sea, either by boisterous winds or dangerous enemies, yet it could not

secure itself, when sin, like Sampson, took hold of the pillars of it, and went about to melt it down. What quick work can sin and fire make! How that strong building vanished of a sudden, as if had been but an apparition! How quickly was it taken down, as if it had been but a slight tent, the cords whereof are presently loosened, and the stakes soon removed! So fell that noble structure, undermined by craft and covetousness, and overladen with pride and prodigality; and great was the fall thereof."

It will at once be seen, amid the quaint expressions and moral reflections with which this extract abounds, what a magnificent superstructure the first Royal Exchange must have been, and what an important place it must have been in the estimation of the inhabitants of London. It would appear that the large apartments above must have been something like our modern bazaars, though containing a far more valuable assortment of articles. It will afterwards be seen that there is nothing of this kind connected with the present Royal Exahange.

I have not been able to ascertain what were the expenses which Sir Thomas Gresham incurred in building the original Royal Exchange. The style and dimensions of the place show that the expenses must have been enormous. Sir Thomas was, perhaps, one of the very few citizens of London at that period whose fortune could justify such an undertaking. His father was called, from his great wealth, and the extent of his commercial transactions, the King's Merchant.

The Royal Exchange was rebuilt without loss of time. On the 23rd of October, Charles the Second laid the base of the column on the west side, as you enter from Threadneedle Street. In eight days afterwards, the foundation stone of the column on the east side of the same entrance was laid by the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second; and on the 19th of the following month, the first stone of the eastern column of the entrance from the south was laid by Prince Rupert. The new building was finished in rather less than two years; and was

opened on the 28th September 1696. The entire expenses of the edifice amounted to 58,962*l.*, which would be equal to 200,000*l.* of our present money. The expenses were defrayed by the city and mercer's company conjointly, each paying one half. Considerable alterations and repairs were made in 1767, towards the expenses of which parliament contributed 10,000*l.* Additional alterations and repairs were made between 1820 and 1826, at an expense of upwards of 30,000*l.*

The Royal Exchange is chiefly built of stone. The form of the building is quadrangular. On either side in the interior is a commodious piazza; and in the central parts of the south and north sides is a piazza on the outside. The whole edifice unites the quality of stability with an excellent architectural taste. The interior is ornamented with statues of many of the sovereigns of England, independently of various other emblematical designs. The principal front of the building measures two hundred and sixteen feet, and the area within, exclusive of

the space occupied by the piazzas, is one hundred and forty-four feet from east to west, by one hundred and seventeen from north to south. This area is open above. It is paved with Turkey stones of a small size, which are said to have been the gift of a merchant who traded to that country. In the centre is a statue of Sir John Bernard, who was for many years the representative in parliament of the city of London. The walls of the piazzas are covered all over, chiefly with written placards advertising the sales of ships, goods, &c. the sailing of vessels, and containing announcements of every other kind connected with commercial and mercantile matters. I do not know the precise charge made for permission to post up these advertisements, but it is very trifling. Some merchants and others purchase the right for the whole year round, and no sooner take one down than they put another up. The shops outside the Exchange are very small in size, and are chiefly occupied by booksellers, stationers, and newsvenders. There are cellars underneath which are let out

for warehouses. On the upper floor, on the north side of the building, is Lloyd's coffee-house, so well known to all connected with the shipping business. This place consists of two lofty rooms, of considerable length, where all business is transacted between brokers and underwriters relative to the insurance of ships at sea. By an arrangement of the society who conduct this establishment, agents are established in all the leading sea-ports throughout the kingdom; and they make a point of furnishing the earliest possible information at head-quarters relative to the arrival and sailing of vessels, and to their condition and equipment. Hence it is that Lloyd's is so celebrated for having the first intelligence in the metropolis respecting shipwrecks and other disasters by sea. On the same floor as Lloyd's there are several other rooms for other purposes, but it is unnecessary to advert to them in other than general terms.

The Royal Exchange, as might be expected, is a great object of curiosity to strangers. Most

persons on a visit to the metropolis make a point of seeing it. It is well worth seeing.

Various conjectures have been made as to the number of persons who visit it in the course of a day. There can be nothing but guesses on the subject. It is impossible to say with confidence what the exact number is. Some of the conjectures which have been hazarded are amusing for their extravagance. In the new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," now publishing in parts, a writer estimates the number at 200,000. This is perfectly astounding. Even supposing all who pass the Royal Exchange every day were to go into it, the number would not be much more than the half of what has been just stated; for it has been ascertained, as I mentioned in the first series of this work, that the entire number of persons who cross London Bridge in a day is under 100,000, and I am sure that every one who knows the two places will concur with me when I say, that the number of persons who go along Cornhill, in other words pass the Royal Exchange, in the

course of a day, is not much greater, if indeed it be so great, than that which crosses London Bridge every day. I should, for my own part, certainly say, that the number of persons who daily visit the Royal Exchange is under 20,000. In the early part of the day the place is quite deserted: you see nothing but an idler here and there, or some stranger gratifying his curiosity by the inspection of a place of which he has heard so much. I have often seen it when there were not fifty individuals present, including the parties who usually hang about it. Formerly the practice was to do business at all hours of the day; but our merchants have for some years past acted on the aristocratic principle of lying in bed in the morning, and postponing the transaction of business till a late hour. It is hardly thought respectable to appear on 'Change before four o'clock. Many of the city merchants would look on themselves as having committed a very serious offence against their commercial dignity, were they to be seen there before the hour I have named. The proper

time for beginning business, that is to say, in the estimation of the city aristocrats, is about four; and the time for finishing business is a little before five. The time allowed for the transaction of business is consequently very short. We hear much of the excellent business habits of Englishmen, and of the singular expedition with which they get through their transactions. Here is an instance of dispatch; the dispatch, however, is a matter of necessity, not choice. Those who do not finish their business by five o'clock must leave it unfinished. They are not allowed to remain after that hour on 'Change. The doors of the place are then shut; and if persons will not go out of their own accord, they will either be turned out or shut in. The officers of 'Change are fully empowered, by one of the regulations, to eject, by the everlasting ringing of a bell in their ears, those who do not choose to go of their own accord at the proper time. At half-past four o'clock one of the officers of the place goes round with a hand-bell, which he peals in the ears of all

those whom he sees in earnest conversation together. This is intended as a broad hint that the time for clearing 'Change is at hand, and that they had better have but few words together, and do as much business as possible in the limited time that remains for them. I need not say that it is no very pleasant thing for those who are engaged in earnest conversation on interesting topics with one another, to have their voices drowned as well as their tympanums invaded, by the deafening noise caused by the bell. These are considerations, however, which never enter the bellman's mind. He has no squeamishness on the subject. He does, as he himself says, his duty, which is to be as prodigal of the peals of his bell as possible. I have sometimes, indeed, thought that the noisy fellow takes a sardonic delight in interrupting those who are most earnest in conversation together. At all events, he displays no ordinary sagacity in singling out their ears for the heartiest salutes which the "long tongue" of his noisy instrument can give. My only surprise is, that

some city aristocrats do not, in a paroxysm of wrath, caused by his unceremonious interruptions, take his bell and smash it in pieces. To be sure they would repent it afterwards, and therefore it is better they should not do it. I may add, they would have no right to do such a thing; but when people act under the influence of a momentary excitement, they sometimes do what is wrong.

'Change about half-past four o'clock is an interesting sight. There you behold merchants of every kind and from all parts of Europe and the civilised world. If you do not always see natives of every part of the world, you see the representatives of the first commercial houses in every civilised country under heaven. The place, which is large, is as full as it can hold. In one place you see three or four all earnestly talking together; in another you see only two; but the conversation which is being carried on between those two may be of the most important kind. It may not only be about transactions of a very extensive nature; but it may be a con-

versation on the result of which the stability of some great commercial establishment hangs. You can see by the earnestness and seriousness of the parties' manner, that the matter of their conversation is of no ordinary importance. In other instances, you see twos and threes standing and conversing together in different places; but you can at once discern, from the levity of their manner, that their business, if indeed they be engaged in business matters at all, is of no very interesting kind. Most probably they are there only from curiosity, as a great many always are; for men accustomed to do business on 'Change are drawn to it at the usual time from a sort of habit, even when they have nothing to do. It is worthy of observation, that during the business hour—for it cannot be called hours—of the Royal Exchange, you very seldom see persons standing by themselves. You almost invariably see every body engaged with some or other of the thousands present. The topics, though almost exclusively of a commercial nature, are of necessity extremely varied. There is not a

44773

branch of commerce under heaven which has not its representative there; there is scarcely a commodity in the world which is not the daily topic of conversation on the Royal Exchange. It is reported of some wit—I forget his name—of Charles the Second's time, that he took notes of the common conversation of a company of philosophers, and that on looking them over when the party broke up, they appeared a strange jumble of nonsense. Conversation relating to commercial transactions of such great importance, and of such vast magnitude as those which take place on 'Change, cannot with strict propriety be said to be nonsense, however much it might look like it; but were it possible to transfer to paper all the conversations which are being carried on at the same time during the busy moments there, they would certainly have the appearance of the most unintelligible jargon which ever escaped human lips. I have sometimes thought, that if a man could himself possess all the commercial information which is possessed by the persons on 'Change

taken altogether, what a living encyclopædia of commercial knowledge he would be.

It were a curious inquiry, were there anything like certain data on which to conduct it, to try to find out what might be the aggregate amount of wealth represented by the gentlemen on 'Change between the hours of four and five o'clock. There is, however, no such data. That such amount of wealth must be enormously great, there can be no doubt. Let it only be recollected that, as before stated, there are individuals from the great majority of the leading commercial houses in London, as well as from abroad, and it will at once be seen that the amount of wealth represented on 'Change must be astoundingly great. Rothschild alone, when alive, represented property to the extent of between 5,000,000*l.* and 6,000,000*l.* To be sure, there are few Rothschilds in the world; there are none in London; but there are, nevertheless, thousands in the city who are men of great opulence. To be worth 100,000*l.* or 200,000*l.* is no uncommon thing among metropolitan mer-

chants. Many can boast of possessing a quarter of a million, and a few even half a million and more. It is easy, then, to fancy what a vast aggregate of wealth there must be, in the supposed circumstances, represented by the individuals assembling in the Royal Exchange. Supposing the number of persons present at a given time were 5,000, and that on an average they were worth 20,000*l.* each—which surely, when it is recollected that Rothschild's successors stand there, is no extravagant supposition—that would give the aggregate amount of wealth at 100,000,000*l.*

I have referred to the late Nathan Rothschild being on 'Change. There he stood, day after day, leaning against a pillar on the right hand, as you enter from Cornhill. He was a little monarch on 'Change; and the pillar in question may be said to have been his throne,—with this difference, that while other monarchs sit on their wooden thrones, he leaned against his throne of granite. To that particular spot he was so devotedly attached, that no consideration would induce him to do business anywhere else. Ar-

dent as was his love of money, and great as were the sacrifices he would have made to increase his more than princely fortune, I question much if the temptation of some thousand pounds would have induced him to quit his favourite pillar. From that pillar he never moved. There he stood, nearly as stationary as the pillar itself, with his back resting against it, as if he could not have supported himself without its aid. With his note-book in his hand, he was always to be seen during the usual hour of business, entering into transactions of great extent with the merchants and commercial men of all countries. Little would the stranger, who chanced to see the prince of capitalists standing on the spot I have mentioned, have fancied, from his personal appearance, what an important influence he exerted on the destinies not only of 'Change, but of the country and Europe. Nothing could be more unprepossessing than his appearance. He was just such a man as the boys in the street would have thought a fine subject for "a lark,"—unless, indeed, they had

been deterred by the lowering expression or sullen aspect of his countenance. He always looked sulky. I question if he ever indulged in a smile. I am sure he never did on 'Change. There his features were never, so far as I could learn, known to relax their rigidity. I have been informed that he did in private, among his more intimate friends and relations, occasionally make an effort to smile; but never with any marked success. His smiles at best could never be said to be more than a species of spoiled grin. His countenance wore a thoughtful aspect; but I never could see anything in it that indicated intelligence. He looked stupid or clownish like. He had a good deal of the appearance of a farmer of the humbler class. His features were massy. He had a flat face. I have scarcely ever seen a Jewish countenance which had less in it of the conformation so characteristic of the faces of that people, than Rothschild's. His features seemed to be huddled together. There was nothing like regularity in them. His face was full, and unusually round. His nose had a

good deal of the cock-up form. His mouth was rather large, and his lips thick and prominent. His forehead was of more than an average height, considering the altitude of his face. His hair had something of a darkish hue, and was generally short. His complexion was pale; except where it was slightly tinged with colour by the weather. He was short and thick. He was considerably under the general height, though it is possible his pot-belly and corpulent appearance generally, may have made him appear shorter than he really was. Any time I saw him, he always wore a great-coat of a dark brown colour. He paid but little attention to his personal decoration. His tailor had no very difficult customer to please. From his appearance I should have inferred, that if he could but have abundance of room in his clothes, he never troubled himself as to the way in which Snip executed his task. I have no notion, however, that either his tailor or any other of his tradesmen would get off as easily on the question of price, as they did as to the taste with which they

executed their tasks. At home he was, as might have been expected, still less particular about his personal appearance. I could relate some extraordinary anecdotes on this subject which have never before appeared in print, and most probably never will; but I have my reasons for passing them over in silence.

It was one feature in Rothschild's conduct when on 'Change, which I have never seen noticed, that he never, except when engaged in business, entered into conversation with any of the thousands in the same place. There he stood, in the midst of the bustle on 'Change, apparently as deeply lost in thought, and with as melancholy a countenance, as if he had been alone in the vast wilderness of shade referred to by Cowper, or been the "Last Man" described by Campbell. I never knew a more striking illustration than he presented, of the possibility of one being in the depths of solitude while in the midst of the busiest and most bustling scenes which this busy and bustling metropolis presents. Whether his reserve was constitu-

tional, or whether it arose from the pride of purse, or whether from the magnitude of the matters which must have been ever occupying his mind, or whether from the conjoint operation of the three causes, I cannot positively say; but the fact of his reserve was as I have stated.

No man accustomed to reflection could see Rothschild on 'Change without feeling a train of interesting thoughts awakened in his bosom. A crowd of ideas always forced themselves on my mind whenever I saw him standing at his favourite pillar. I thought of the immense power which a being who had little personally or intellectually to recommend him had, not only in his adopted country, but throughout the civilised world. The public in general had no conception of the greatness of that power. Were the secrets of the last twenty years, as these relate to the different courts of Europe, and to the various aspects which matters both here and on the continent assumed during that period, revealed, it would be seen that he was a prime mover in many of the great scenes which

have passed before us, though an actor who always remained behind the scenes. He had in many cases the power of causing or preventing war, according as he felt disposed or not to loosen his purse-strings and to supply princes with the means of war. The peace of Europe thus often depended entirely on him. And how affecting the thought, that in deciding how he should act, whether he should or should not make the required advances to the crowned heads of Europe, he was not influenced by any considerations bearing on the great question of humanity, but merely by calculations as to the prudence of the thing, viewed simply as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence! The vast amount of happiness or of misery dependent on the course he should adopt, never, it is fair to presume, entered for one moment into his thoughts, or influenced his decisions in any degree. It was his, I repeat, to let loose or restrain the demon of war with all its devastations and horrors, just as he thought fit to unloose or keep shut the strings of his ample purse: it

was in his power to subject the world itself to the ravages of war, or to avert the frightful calamity. The destinies of millions of our fellow-creatures were in his hands. How soon could he have made myriads of wives widows, and children fatherless! How many mothers could he have, in the space of a few years, bereft of their sons! And what multitudes of sisters could he have deprived of their brothers in the same short space! For how many hundreds of thousands of men, in the prime of life, could he have prepared a premature grave! To have looked on one whose personal appearance had less than that of most of his fellow-beings to recommend him, and to think that he possessed so vast a power over the fortunes of Europe, was one of the most melancholy reflections which could obtrude itself on the human mind. It is painful to think that mere wealth, without regard to the moral qualities of the possessor, should exercise so mighty an influence over the destinies not only of one country but of mankind. There must be something radically defective in the

condition of society, when mere wealth can enter so largely into the elements of human happiness or human misery. It is to be feared it will continue to be so until the dominion of wealth shall be overthrown, and for ever trampled under foot by the antagonist principle of knowledge,—not merely a scientific or philosophic knowledge,—but a knowledge based on the great truths of the Christian religion.

Rothschild, however, notwithstanding his vast and unparalleled opulence, has ceased to exist. Whatever influence it had on the monarchs of Europe, there was one monarch on whom it had none whatever. That monarch is Death. He asserts his dominion as unceremoniously and peremptorily over the most opulent and most distinguished, as over the poorest and most obscure. He is no respecter of persons. It is to be hoped that no human being, now that Rothschild is no more, will ever possess the same power, arising from the same causes, over the destinies of mankind, as he did.

But these are reflections I must not pursue

further. Since the death of Rothschild it were difficult to say what individual or what house, if any, has taken the lead on 'Change. It is doubtful, indeed, whether we shall ever see any one occupying his place there. To say nothing of him in his capacity of a loan-contractor, his transactions were often of a most extensive kind. It would be a most interesting piece of information, were it possible to obtain it, to know what may have been the amount of his transactions on 'Change from the day he first entered it till that on which he left it for ever. This, however, is information which will never be obtained. His own most intimate friends cannot have any idea of what the extent of his transactions on 'Change were from first to last.

Many persons suppose that a great deal of business, in the shape of buying and selling goods, is transacted on 'Change. This is a mistake. Some such transactions do take place; but they are neither so numerous nor important as one unacquainted with 'Change would be apt to imagine. The object of meeting there is not

so much with the view of making purchases, as in talking over all matters connected with commerce, making preliminary arrangements for entering into large speculations, and regulating the prices and the course of business. The bargains that are made are chiefly effected through the medium of merchant-brokers, who, as in the case of the brokers on the Stock Exchange, have an allowance of one-eighth, or half-a-crown per cent. on the amount of business done. If, for example, a merchant wishes to purchase a certain quantity of coffee, say twenty tons, he employs his broker to effect the sale, either stating the highest price he will give, or telling the broker to make the most favourable terms he can. The broker in such a case applies to the party on 'Change with whom he thinks he can most easily and satisfactorily do the business, telling him he wants a certain quantity of the article, and the price he is authorised to give, if peremptorily limited as to terms. The seller closes or not, according to circumstances, with the offer made.

One leading object of the Royal Exchange is to afford facilities for paying and receiving monies on mercantile transactions with foreign houses. Bills are drawn on or made payable to foreign houses for goods sent or received by London merchants. These bills are brought to 'Change, and through the intervention of the brokers, as in the case already supposed, are negotiated there. Some of the larger houses who have foreign connexions are always ready to receive these bills, asking no more than a trifling profit on the transaction. The terms are always regulated by the state of the exchanges, in relation to England, at the place at which the bills are drawn or made payable. I have heard that formerly houses were always ready to negotiate such bills on such terms as would afford them only half-a-crown or one-eighth per cent. on each 100*l.* for their trouble. Now, however, the thing is not done for such fractional profits, though the profits are still small.

The prices at which bills of exchange are

bought or sold do not vary, on undoubted bills, to any material extent on 'Change. A few of the leading brokers, after having ascertained the comparative demand and supply, fix the price among themselves, which price is strictly adhered to in all the more important transactions of the day. In cases, however, where a doubt exists as to the credit of the parties whose names are on bills, the prices do vary to a considerable extent, according to the strength or slightness of the doubt entertained. The bills which are bought and sold on the Royal Exchange are not always *bona fide* bills of exchange. It is understood, that of late years a great many fictitious bills purporting in some instances to be drawn on persons who never existed, and in others with real names with the permission of the parties, have been brought into the market merely as a matter of speculation. As, however, in all such cases the party purchasing takes care to see that the names of responsible persons are adhibited to the bills, if not as drawers or accepters, as indorsers, the

transaction, in so far as regards its practical results, is not attended with loss or injury to any one.

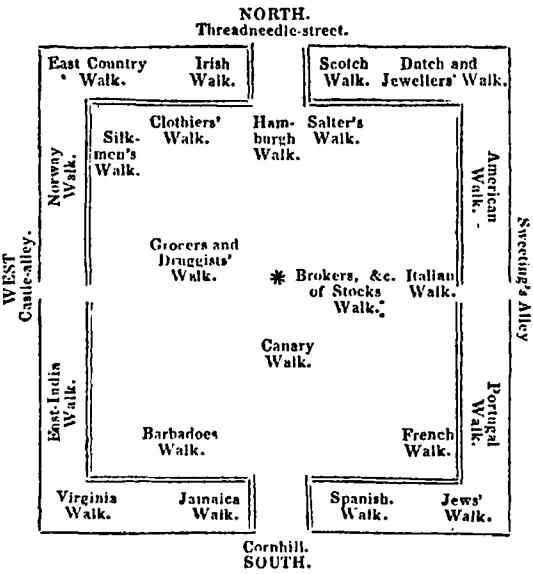
There are only two days in the week on which business of this kind is transacted. These are Tuesday and Friday. I have endeavoured to find something like probable data—as absolutely certain data were out of the question—by which to calculate the amount of money which may change hands on one of these days; but I find the thing is not to be had. A gentleman who has been many years on 'Change estimates the average amount, at the briskest season of the year, at from 150,000*l.* to 200,000*l.* On those occasions in which a foreign loan has been contracted, there is of course a very great increase in this description of business. It was supposed by those most conversant with such matters, that when the Messrs. Barings some years since contracted a loan of 6,000,000*l.* with France, the amount of money which changed hands on one of the days when the purchasers of scrip were paying their money, must have been at least 500,000*l.*

The affairs of the Royal Exchange are managed by the Gresham Committee. It is a common proverb in Scotland, that new lairds have new laws. An amusing illustration of this proverb was afforded nearly twenty years since, soon after the appointment, as a member of this committee, of an alderman celebrated for his partiality to turtle soup. Desirous of marking the commencement of his official career as a member of the committee in question, by something new, he succeeded in prevailing on the members to agree to an alteration in the hour of shutting up the place. No sooner had this determination been come to by the committee, than the aldermanic gentleman summoned the officers of the place into his presence. Obedient to his high behests they forthwith presented themselves. Putting his hands into his waistcoat pockets, and strutting through the committee-room with an air of infinite self-importance, he informed the officers of the resolution to which the committee had come. "And now," he added, pulling himself up and

speaking in a tone which was authoritative in the highest degree, "and now take care, on pain of losing your situations, that the place be cleared and the doors shut every night by five o'clock. No excuse admitted, remember; and no favour shown to any party, be that party who he may." The servants of the place bowed in the best way they could, and promised the most perfect obedience to the alderman's orders. The doors not having been before shut until six o'clock, it was with difficulty the poor fellows, notwithstanding the most exemplary use of handbells, and all the other exertions they could make, could effect even a partial clearance at five. A considerable number refused to stir a foot. What could the poor men do! The stern looks of the alderman, the night before, still haunted their minds, and his haughty tones were still ringing in their ears, notwithstanding all the noise they caused by their own bells. They, therefore, closed the doors on the refractory gentlemen who remained in the place.

After having confined them there about three hours, they, acting on the authority of some of the other members of the committee, opened one of the doors. Fancy their amazement and horror, when the first person among the prisoners that presented himself was the worthy alderman himself! He vowed vengeance in the shape of the immediate dismissal of the officers of the place, but one of the committee-men who was present when he gave such peremptory orders to shut the doors at five and to show no favour to any man, having interposed and reminded his aldermanic highness that they were only, as obedient servants, carrying his positive instructions into effect, he was obliged to let the matter pass over. Law-makers, says the old adage, should not be law-breakers. The alderman gave practical proof that he ever afterwards remembered this adage. He was most exemplary in setting an example of obedience to his own legislation; for no one ever again saw him on 'Change after a quarter to five.

The Royal Exchange is divided into a number of departments called walks. There is the Scotch walk, the French walk, the Dutch walk, the Italian walk, &c. &c. There is not, indeed, any country in the world of great commercial importance which has not its walk. The merchants and parties engaged in the business peculiar to the country thus singled out, are supposed to station themselves in their respective walks. This is done to a considerable extent, though you will by no means find that the different walks are adhered to with scrupulous closeness. By means, however, of these divisions of 'Change, one party can, in the great majority of cases, find out another party with the greatest ease, even when the number of gentlemen present may be between 4,000 or 5,000. The following sketch of the way in which the space on 'Change is divided among the leading commercial countries, will give a better idea o it than it were possible to do by mere verba description:—



Were it a part of the plan of this work, which it is not, to embrace matters bearing directly upon the question of political economy, this would be the proper place to enter into the subject of the "exchanges" between this and other countries. But though not attempting to popularise a subject which, from its very nature must ever be to the majority of readers unintelligible, it may be right to refer for a moment to

some of the more obvious principles connected with it. Political economists, and those who have large transactions on the Royal Exchange, speak of two kinds of exchange. The one is the *nominal*, the other is the *real* exchange. What is meant by the *nominal* exchange, may be understood by putting a single hypothetical case. Suppose the currency of France were seven and a-half per cent. below the Mint standard and purity, and the currency of England were on a par with the Mint standard and purity, then the nominal exchange as between France and England will be seven and a-half per cent. in favour of this country. But suppose, on the other hand, that the currency of this country were now, as it has been before, twelve per cent. depreciated below the Mint standard and purity, while in France the currency was only five per cent. degraded, then the nominal exchange, as between France and England, would be seven per cent. in favour of France, or against this country. The nominal exchange, therefore, is always regulated by the relative value of the currency of a country to the

Mint standard and purity, compared with the relative value of the currency to the Mint standard and purity in any given country with regard to which the state of exchange is sought to be ascertained.

The *real* exchange, again, between any two countries, is always limited by the expense which would be incurred in the transfer of bullion from one country to another. A merchant will prefer a bill of exchange for the purpose of remittance to another country, to the transmission of bullion, provided the premium charged on the bill do not exceed the cost of the transfer of the bullion; but if it should, then he will export the requisite amount of the precious metals to pay his debts to the foreign house with which he has transacted business. If, for example, a merchant in London owes 100*l.* to a house in Paris, and the premium on a bill on Paris were twenty shillings, he will decline to purchase a bill if he can send over 100*l.* worth of bullion for ten shillings. But though the premium on bills can never exceed the amount of expense incurred

in the transfer of bullion from one country to another, there may be a great variation in the amount of premium and in the expenses of the transmission of bullion. In the time of war, for example, or when commercial intercourse between two countries is restricted, the expenses of transmitting bullion from one to another are necessarily increased, owing to the unavoidable augmentation in the freight, insurance, &c. The premium on bills of exchange, therefore, always bearing as it does a certain relation to the expenses of transmitting bullion, fluctuates very considerably at different times.

The real exchange between any two countries is regulated in a considerable degree by the supply and demand for bills. Supposing, for the sake of illustration, that any two given countries had an equal supply of bullion, and that the currency of each was either at its Mint standard, or that it was equally depreciated below that standard in the case of both countries, then the exchange will be in favour of whichever country has the least debts due to the

other. If London owes Paris a greater amount of debt than Paris owes London, then there will of necessity be a greater demand for bills on Paris than there will be in Paris for bills on London. The premium will consequently be greater in London for bills on Paris, than it will be in Paris for bills on London. The exchanges will, in other words, be in favour of France and against Great Britain; and they will be so in the supposed case to an extent proportioned to the greatness of the demand for bills in London on Paris. If, on the other hand, the debts due by Paris to London be greater than those due by London to Paris, then the demand for bills in Paris on London will be in the same relative proportion, and the premium on such bills will be correspondingly greater in Paris for bills on London, than in London for bills on Paris.

In calculating the actual state of the exchanges as between any two countries, it will be necessary to ascertain both the real and nominal exchange. This is always done by our mer-

chants before fixing the amount of premium on bills drawn on foreign countries. If, to illustrate this part of the subject, the nominal exchange be five per cent. in favour of France, as against this country, and the real exchange be one per cent. in favour of France, then the actual state of the exchange will be six per cent in favour of France and against this country. But as it often happens that the nominal exchange is in favour of a particular country while the real exchange is against it, then the merchant must ascertain the difference between the nominal and real exchange, which will give him the exact state of the exchange, as between the two countries. For instance, suppose the nominal exchange be five per cent. in favour of Paris, while the real exchange is one per cent. against it and in favour of this country, then the actual condition of the exchange as between the two countries, will be four per cent. in favour of France. If, again, the nominal rate of exchange in France be two per cent. in favour of this country, while the real exchange in England is two per cent.

against France, then the exchange between the two countries will be at par, and *vice versa.* In the case formerly supposed of the supply of bullion being equal in any two given countries, and the currency of each being of the Mint standard and purity, then the exchange between those two countries will depend entirely on the state of the real exchange; in other words, on the comparative supply and demand for bills on the two countries.

It sometimes happens that the *computed* exchange between this and another country may be favourable to us, while the real exchange is against us, and *vice versa.* This occurs when there is a difference between the nominal exchange and the nominal prices of this country and any other given country, while the price of bullion is the same in both. Mr. Blake, as quoted by Mr. Maculloch, gives a supposed example with the view of illustrating this. He says—"Suppose the computed exchange between Hamburgh and London to be one per cent. against this country, and that this arises

from a real exchange which is favourable to the amount of four per cent., and a nominal exchange which is unfavourable to the extent of five per cent.; let the real price of bullion at Hamburgh and London be precisely the same, and consequently, the nominal prices different by the amount of the nominal exchange, or five per cent.; now, if the expenses of freight, insurance, &c., on the transit of bullion from Hamburgh, are three per cent., it is evident that a profit would be derived from the import of that article, notwithstanding the *computed* exchange was one per cent. against us. In this case the merchant must give a premium of one per cent. for the foreign bill, to pay for the bullion. 100*l.* worth of bullion at Hamburgh would therefore cost him 101*l.*, and the charges of importation would increase the sum to 104*l.* Upon the subsequent sale, then, for 105*l.* of depreciated currency in the home market, he would derive from the transaction a profit of 1*l.* This sum is precisely the difference between the real exchange and the expenses of transit, that part of

the computed exchange which depends on the nominal producing no effect; since whatever is lost by its unfavourable state, is counterbalanced by a corresponding inequality of nominal prices."

From the observations I have made, it will be seen how it happens that when the exchanges are against us, the gold flows out of this country; and how, on the other hand, when the exchanges are in our favour, there is an influx of gold to our ports from foreign countries.

In negotiating bills of exchange it often happens that the party in London who has a debt to pay some foreign house, does not discharge that debt by a direct remittance to the place where the debt is due. He must, before making the remittance, ascertain the state of exchanges not only between this country and that to which he means to make his remittance, but between the latter and other countries. Mr. Maculloch, in one of his articles, illustrates this point in a manner as clear as it is capable of being made to the ordinary reader. He says—"When a

merchant in London means to discharge a debt due by him in Paris, it is his business to ascertain, not only the direct state of exchange between London and Paris, and consequently the sum which he must pay in London for a bill on Paris equivalent to his debt, but also the state of exchange between London and Hamburgh, Hamburgh and Paris, &c.; for it frequently happens that it will be more advantageous for him to buy a bill on Hamburgh, Amsterdam, or Lisbon, and to direct his agent to invest the proceeds in a bill on Paris, rather than remit directly to the latter. This is termed the *arbitration* of exchange. Thus, for example, if the exchange between London and Amsterdam be 35*s*. Flemish per pound sterling, and between Paris and Amsterdam 1*s*. 6*d*. Flem. per franc, then, in order to ascertain whether a direct or indirect remittance to Paris would be most advantageous, we must calculate what would be the value of the franc in English money if the remittance were made through Holland; for if it be less than that resulting from the direct exchange, it

will obviously be the preferable mode of remitting. This is determined by stating, as, 35*s.* Flemish (the Amsterdam currency in 1*l.* sterling) : 1*s.* 6*d.* Flemish (the Amsterdam currency in a franc) : : 1*l.* : 10*d.*, the proportional or *arbitrated* value of the franc. Hence, if the English money, or bill of exchange, to pay a debt on Paris, were remitted by Amsterdam, it would require 10*d.* to discharge a debt of a franc, or 1*l.* to discharge a debt of 24 francs; and, therefore, if the exchange between London and Paris were twenty-four, it would be indifferent to the English merchant whether he remitted directly to Paris, or indirectly *via* Amsterdam; but if the exchange between London and Paris were *above* twenty-four, then a direct remittance would be preferable; while, if, on the other hand, the direct exchange were less than twenty-four, the indirect remittance ought as plainly to be preferred."

I have thus glanced at the subject of the exchanges, as it is so intimately connected with the Royal Exchange. It is one about which we see

something in every newspaper we take into our hands; it is one, moreover, of the greatest interest to all classes of the community; for from the state of exchanges as between this and other countries, we may, in most cases, infer our real condition as a commercial community.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD BAILEY.

General remarks—Description of the place—Observations about the proceedings—Central Criminal Courts Act—Prisoners' Counsel Bill—Counsel practising at the Old Bailey—Passing sentence on prisoners convicted—Amusing scenes in the course of the trials—Anecdote of the late Mr. Justice Buller—Witty observations sometimes made by prisoners when sentence is passed—Miscellaneous observations—Mr. Curtis—The Recorder.

THE Old Bailey is to a large class of the metropolitan community a very important place. It is constantly present to the minds of many: there are thousands in London who think of nothing else,—when they condescend to think at all. It haunts them by day; it disturbs their slum-

bers by night. The very name grates on their ears: mention it abruptly in their hearing, and they start and turn as pale as did the Queen of Denmark when young Hamlet pressed home on her by implication, the murder of his father. Why is the Old Bailey, it will be asked, constantly before the minds of the persons referred to? Why so great a bugbear to them? Why have they so great a horror of the very name? Because, conscious of deserving a temporary lodgment in it, with the unpleasant consequences which follow, they live in the constant apprehension of it. These, however, are not the most confirmed criminals: the latter class have been too hardened by guilt to have any thought or fear on the subject.

But though the interest attaching to the Old Bailey is peculiarly great in the case of the parties to whom I allude, it is a subject which from the prominency with which some unfortunate circumstances or other always keep it before the public, is more or less interesting to all.

Independently of what is going on in the in-

terior during the sitting of the Central Criminal Courts, the scene exhibited outside is always well worth seeing. But to be seen to the greatest advantage, one should visit the place on a Monday morning when the courts open. On the street outside, in the place leading to the New Court and in the large yard then thrown open opposite the stairs leading to the Old Court, there is always, at such a time, a great concourse of what may be called mixed society with a propriety I have seldom seen equalled in any other case. There you see both sexes, in great numbers. There are persons of all ages, of every variety of character, and in every diversity of circumstances. There are the prosecutors and the witnesses for and against the prosecution. The judges and the persons to be tried are the only parties you miss. A considerable number of those you see, are the relatives and friends of the prisoners; but, perhaps, a still larger number consist of confirmed thieves, whose moral feelings, if they ever had any, are so completely blunted by a long and

daring perseverance in crime, that they can be present at the trial of others without ever troubling themselves about their own guilt. It is amazing to see the number of such persons in the galleries, when the proceedings have commenced. Some of them go from a sheer love of being present at the trial of criminals like themselves. Others, and a considerable part of them, are attracted to the place because some of their acquaintances—their coadjutors in some previous crime—have got themselves, to use their own phraseology, into trouble. But on other days as well as on the first day, at the commencement of the proceedings in the courts, the place outside is more or less crowded with all the varieties of character to which I have adverted. As the sessions draw towards a close the numbers diminish. It is not, however, only at the opening of the courts in the morning, that there is a crowd of persons outside the Old Bailey: a great number are to be seen hanging on all day long. These chiefly consist of parties who are either prosecutors, witnesses, or

the relatives of the prisoners to be tried. In the area leading to the New Court, that area being much more comfortable than the place leading to the Old Court, the attendance is always greatest. There is nothing but bustle and confusion. Every one is walking about, and every one is talking, if not to anybody else, to himself. A silent or motionless person would be quite a curiosity there.

The Old Bailey is divided into two courts. Formerly there was only one court; but for a number of years past there have been two. The one last established is called the New Court; the court which previously existed is called the Old Court. The most important cases are usually disposed of in the Old Court; indeed the New Court is rather looked on as an assistant to the other than as being on an equality with it. Some of the judges, according to arrangements among themselves and the Recorder, usually preside in the Old Court. Mr. Serjeant Arabin and Mr. Common Serjeant Mirehouse administer justice in the New. It is necessary that

one or more of the aldermen of the city, or the Sheriff of London, be present on the bench while the trials are proceeding. They seldom, however, take any part in what is going on. The Sheriff, usually attended by his under-sheriff, seems to have no ambition to gratify in sitting on the bench, beyond that of being seen to advantage with his gold chain around his neck. As for the aldermen, again, as they have no such imposing badge of office to display, nothing indeed but their plain aldermanic gowns, you almost always find them engaged in reading the newspapers.

The New Court does not sit the first day of the session. The ceremony of opening the sessions always takes place in the Old Court, the presence of all the jurymen and other parties interested in the trials being required there while the Recorder delivers the charge.

The interior of both courts is tastefully fitted up. They have of late been re-altered and repaired at an expense of several thousand pounds. The judges in either court sit on the north side.

Immediately below them are the counsel, all seated around the table. Directly opposite the bench is the bar, and above it, but a little further back, is the gallery. The jury sit, in the Old Court, on the right of the bench: in the New Court they sit on the left of the bench. The witness-box is, in both courts, at the farthest end of the seats of the jury. The reporters, in both courts, sit opposite the jury.

The proceedings at the Old Bailey are usually much more interesting than those in courts of law. The parties tried are generally persons whose mode of life has imparted something of peculiarity to their characters. The circumstances under which the offences charged have been committed are, for the most part, of a singular kind, while the rapidity with which one witness succeeds another, and the ludicrous scenes which are so often exhibited in the examination of witnesses, give altogether so much variety and interest to the proceedings, that it is impossible for any one ever to tire of them. Hence, both courts are usually full of specta-

tors: nay, such is the interest which some persons take in the proceedings, that they will scarcely, on certain occasions, be absent for an hour from the commencement to the close of the sessions. They will even pay their sixpences every day for admission to the galleries, though the consequence should be the privation of a dinner for eight days to come.

Before the Central Criminal Courts' Act came into operation, which was in 1834, the Old Bailey sessions were only held eight times a year. Since then, the extension of the jurisdiction of these courts to part of Kent, Essex, and Surrey, has been followed by so great an addition to the Calendar, that the number of trials each session—the courts now sit twelve times a year—are as large as before. The average numnumber of cases at each sessions is about three hundred. The comparative prevalency of the various offences with which the prisoners are charged will be inferred from the following table respecting the parties convicted in the course of 1836:—

Bigamy	4
Burglary	41
Cattle Stealing	3
Child Stealing	2
Coining	10
Cutting and wounding with intent to murder	6
Embezzlement	25
Forging and uttering forged instruments	12
Horse stealing	7
Housebreaking	36
Larceny, &c.	734
Larceny in a dwelling-house, above *5l.*	61
Letter, stealing from the Post-office a	3
Letter, sending a threatening	1
Manslaughter	8
Misdemeanour	168
Perjury	2
Rape	1
Receiving stolen goods	35
Robbery	21
Sacrilege	1
Sheep stealing	4
Shooting at with intent to Murder	4
Transportation, returning from	1
Total	1190

The usual proportion of acquittals to the convictions may be conjectured with a confidence amounting to certainty, when I mention that at one of the late sessions they stood thus:—Acquittals 96, convictions 202, making about one acquittal for two convictions.

In October, last year, the Prisoners' Counsel Bill came into operation, and the consequence, as was to be expected, has been the protraction of each session, and an increased expense. Formerly the average duration of the sittings was seven days: now it is ten. Counsel are now allowed to address the jury; formerly they were restricted to an examination and cross-examination of the witnesses. The permission to make a speech has been turned to good account. Addresses of considerable length are made by the counsel on either side in every important case, which circumstance accounts for the protraction of the sittings. The expenses of each session used formerly to average something less than 350*l.*: now they exceed 800*l.*

Sir Peter Laurie and others have strenuously objected to the Prisoners' Counsel Bill on two grounds. The first is, that it leads to the more frequent acquittal of guilty parties. The second objection is, the great additional expense incurred.

With regard to the first objection, did it never occur to Sir Peter and the other gentlemen to whom I refer, that if the consequence of the prisoner's counsel being allowed to address the jury be the escape, in some few instances, of the guilty, the consequence of the previous want of such permission was the conviction of the innocent? The probability is immeasurably greater that the innocent formerly suffered, than that the guilty now escape. The prisoner, in the great majority of cases, is not only unacquainted with the forms of the court, and has none of the dexterity of counsel, but his mind is too much affected by the unpleasantness and perilousness of his situation to be able so far to collect his thoughts, as to turn the circumstances, which he may know to be in his favour, to their proper account. By giving him the benefit of an address to the jury, on the part of his counsel, he is only put in a better situation to establish his innocence, if he be innocent, than he was before. If the result of such a privilege, should be in some cases the acquittal of a guilty person, that

is an evil which is scarcely worthy of the name, compared with that of convicting the innocent. "Better that ten guilty persons should escape, than that one innocent man suffer!" So said the excellent Sir Matthew Hale, and so say justice and humanity. He is not a fit subject for being reasoned with, who would maintain that a man's right to establish his innocence, if he can do so, should be taken from him because a guilty party, by availing himself of the same permission, may contrive to delude the jury into the belief that he is innocent. It is one of the clearest dictates of reason, humanity, and justice, that no means by which a man may establish his innocence should be withheld from him. Besides, Sir Peter Laurie and those who like him are haunted with apprehensions that the consequence of the new course at the Old Bailey may in some instances be the escape of the guilty,—should console themselves with the reflection that the probability is, that those who escape on one occasion will be convicted and duly punished on some future one; for it will be

found in the far greater number of cases, that those who have committed one offence will go on committing others until they have, to use their own expressive phraseology, got themselves fairly booked for Botany Bay, or some other place of punishment.

As regards the objection grounded on the additional expense, it is unworthy a moment's notice. No expense can be too great where the ends of justice are to be promoted. And what, after all, is the expense in this case? Something more than double what it was, it is true; but still it is an expense which will not be felt by the community; and even though it were, they would not, under the circumstances, complain of it.

But this is a digression; my justification of it is in the importance of the subject. The Old Bailey courts sit from nine in the morning, till nine, ten, and sometimes eleven at night. Nine is the usual time for rising; but when a case goes on up to that hour, the courts usually sit until it is finished. From the meeting of the

courts in the morning, till five in the afternoon, country juries sit. From five to the rising of the courts, London juries sit.

The number of counsel usually attending the Old Bailey, is from twenty to twenty-five; but the business may be said to be monopolised by five or six. The four gentlemen who have the largest share of business are Mr. Charles Phillips, Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Adolphus, and Mr. Bodkin. Mr. Phillips, I am inclined to think, makes more money by his Old Bailey practice than any other counsel. Mr. Clarkson is, no doubt, next to him. In the course of one session, some years ago, Mr. Phillips was employed in no fewer than 110 cases. And it is nothing uncommon for him to be counsel in from 700 to 800 cases in one year. I will not undertake to give an estimate of the annual receipts of either of the gentlemen I have named, from their Old Bailey business, because I have no data on which I can confidently ground such estimate. Their fees vary, according to the circumstances of the parties by whom they are employed, and the

importance of the case, from one to ten guineas. Taking their average amount of fees at three guineas, which possibly is not far from the fact, Mr. Phillips's practice at the Old Bailey would be worth from 2,000*l.* to 2,500*l.* per annum.

The average number of cases daily tried at the Old Bailey can easily be inferred from the fact of three hundred being disposed of, according to the new system, in ten days. I have known instances, however, in which in the New Court alone, from forty to fifty cases have been decided in one day. The most protracted trial ever known, I believe, to have taken place at the Old Bailey, was one last year, arising out of a death which was caused by the racing of two omnibuses. The trial lasted five days.

Very few of the prisoners receive sentence at the time of their conviction. Most of them are brought up to the bar of the New Court, when all the cases have been disposed of, to receive their respective sentences. They are sentenced in classes. Five or six, or some other limited number of them, who are destined to receive the

same amount and description of punishment, are called up at a time, and the Recorder, naming them individually, or "each and all of them," as the technical phrase is, pronounces the sentence of the court on them. I have sometimes seen fifty or sixty poor creatures standing at the bar at the same time. And a more affecting spectacle, before all is over, is seldom witnessed. The desperate bravado is visibly depicted in the countenances of some; while the anxious mind, the palpitating heart, and the deepest feeling of sorrow and shame, are as clearly to be seen in the countenances of others. The transition from one emotion of mind to another, is sometimes exceedingly violent and sudden. I have seen the down-cast eye and the trembling frame of the prisoner who expected some severe punishment, succeeded in a moment by the most manifest tokens of joy, when the punishment to be inflicted was comparatively lenient. I have seen, on the other hand, persons—female prisoners especially—who had remained unmoved up to the last moment, as cheerful and composed

as if nothing had been the matter, because they laid the flattering unction to their souls that they would get off with a few months' imprisonment, or some very lenient punishment,—turn pale as death, look for a moment wildly about them, then close their eyes, and uttering a heart-rending shriek, fall down in a swoon, when the sentence of transportation for life has been passed upon them. Such a sentence comes with a most appalling power, even to the strongest-minded and most hardened criminals of our own sex, when it comes unexpectedly. To many, I am convinced, from what I have myself witnessed, such a sentence is armed with more terrors than would be even death itself. They look on it virtually as death in so far as all their friends are concerned; while the imagination pictures to itself, very often in deeper colours than the reality warrants, the horrors of that state of slavery which can only close with the close of their life.

But these are not the only affecting scenes which are witnessed at the Old Bailey. It is

often a most touching thing to look on the party at the bar, coupled with the circumstances under which such party stands there. In many cases it is a first offence, and the prisoner may perhaps have been prompted to it by stern necessity. I have seen a mother stand at the bar of the Old Bailey charged with stealing a loaf of bread; and I have seen it proved beyond all question, that the woman had been induced to commit the offence in order to save her children from starvation. I have seen a poor mother, in other circumstances, charged with a very trivial offence, with an infant hanging at her breast, standing pale and trembling at the same bar. I have seen the child looking in its mother's face, and playing its innocent tricks, while every word which the witnesses were speaking against her, went like so many daggers to her bosom. I have seen this woman torn from her children, —they consigned to the workhouse,—and she sentenced to transportation for life. I have seen on repeated occasions the father appear as prosecutor against his own son. I have seen him

shed tears in profusion while he stated the circumstances under which he had been compelled to appear in a situation so revolting to his feelings. I have seen the mother prosecuting her own daughter, and with a heart sobbing so violently as to render her words inarticulate, beseech the court to transport her, in order to save her from a worse and still more ignominious fate. These are affecting scenes which are far from uncommon at the Central Criminal Courts.

Were a stranger to drop into the Old Bailey while the process of passing sentence is being gone through, without being aware of the nature of the place, he would form a thousand conjectures as to the character of the business transacting in his presence, before he hit on the right one. Counsel, reporters, spectators, everybody, look as unconcerned as if nothing were the matter. The alderman, if there be only one on the bench, is, you may depend on it, reading the newspaper; if there are two of them, they are joking and laughing together. The scene altogether has certainly, in ordinary circumstances,

more the appearance of comedy than of tragedy in it.

This is to be regretted; but it is perhaps in some measure a necessary consequence of the frequent repetition of the same sort of proceedings. It is curious to reflect on the influence which familiarity with anything has on the human mind. Scenes which in the first instance most powerfully affect one's feelings, cease to make any impression whatever, or to be looked on in any other light than as mere matters of course, when we become habituated to them.

But there is one part of the proceedings at the Old Bailey when the ceremony of passing sentence is being gone through, for which no extenuation can be offered. I refer to the practice of passing the sentence of death on groups of prisoners convicted of offences of lesser magnitude, when it is not intended that such sentence shall be carried into effect. This is a species of solemn judicial trifling, to call it by no harsher name, which cannot be too severely reprobated; it is practically to make the judge

utter a falsehood: what other construction can be put on his gravely telling an unfortunate person that he will be executed when nothing of the kind is in reality intended? To be sure, it is not the judge's fault: he cannot help himself: the anomalous and absurd constitution of the law on the subject imposes on him the necessity of acting as he does. It is gratifying to find, that government have it in contemplation to do away with this most unbecoming state of things. Nothing could be more calculated to inspire contempt for the law of the land, than the witnessing the enaction of this solemn farce month after month at the Old Bailey. I am sure the judge himself must often deeply regret that the duty should be imposed on him of passing a sentence which it is not meant to carry into effect; for in addition to the abstract impropriety of the thing, he must be pained to see the prisoners on whom the sentence of death is in such cases pronounced, laughing, and winking, and making faces at their acquaintances in the gallery, while he is performing his part of the solemn farce.

But let me now turn to some of those amusing, and ofttimes ludicrous scenes which are so frequently to be met with at the Old Bailey. A person who has not been present could hardly think it possible that so much cause for laughter could occur in a place appropriated to the administration of criminal justice. Usually the most fruitful source of merriment is found in the examination of witnesses. Mr. Charles Phillips is celebrated for his tact in extracting the laughable and ludicrous from witnesses, while subjecting them to the process of an examination or cross-examination. And yet it is a matter of frequent occurrence for him and other counsel to be completely put down by some happy and unexpected observation of the witnesses whom they are trying to make ridiculous. Not long since, I saw an intelligent looking female, seemingly about thirty-five years of age, turn the laugh against the counsel—one of the most eminent at the Old Bailey—who was trying to show off his wit at her expense. After asking whether she was married, and be-

ing answered in the negative, he put the question to her—"Have you ever, madam, had the offer of a husband?"

The witness paused for a moment, evidently thinking with herself that the question was one which she was not called on to answer.

Counsel—Perhaps, madam, you may think the question an improper one; but—

Witness—It *is* an improper one.

Counsel—Pardon me, ma'am, but it is one which I must insist upon being answered. Have you ever had the offer of a husband?

Witness—(Looking to the judge) I cannot see what it has to do with the present case.

Counsel—It's not, madam, what you can see, but it's what I ask, that you have to do with. Pray come, do tell me at once, have you ever had the offer of a husband?

Witness—Do you mean to propose yourself, Mr. ——, that you seem so anxious to know?

A burst of laughter proceeded from the bench, the jury, the other counsel, and all parts of the court, at this retort, which derived an infinite

additional force from the peculiar manner in which it was delivered.

Counsel—Well, ma'am, as you seem disinclined to answer the question, I take it for granted that you have had no such offer.

Witners—That's *your* opinion, is it, Mr. —?

Counsel—It is, madam.

Witness—Then allow me, Sir, to inform you that you are quite mistaken.

Counsel—O, then, you *have* had an offer of a husband, have you, Miss ——? May I take the liberty of asking how it happens that you did not accept the offer?

Witness—That is my affair, not yours, Mr. ——

Counsel—Really, Miss ——, you seem inclined to be impertinent.

Witness—Then, I am only following the example you have set me, Mr. ——.

Here again a peal of laughter proceeded from all parts of the court, to the manifest mortification of the counsel. Annoyed at the thought

of being discomfited by a female, he resumed his interrogatories.

Counsel—What may your age be, madam? perhaps you will condescend to tell us that.

Witness—I'm old enough to give my evidence, and that is all you have anything to do with.

Counsel—Allow me, Miss ——, to tell you that you know nothing of what I may or may not have to do with it.

Witness—Then if I don't know what you have to do with it, I sha'n't tell you my age.

Counsel—I insist, madam, on knowing what is your age.

Witness—If you are so anxious to know, you'll find it in the parish register.

A deafening shout of laughter again proceeded from all parts of the court. Mr. —— looked amazingly foolish.

Counsel—Well, madam, you have no doubt sufficient reasons for maintaining this reserve about your age. Perhaps you would have no

objection to tell us whether you have any expectations of ever being married?

Witness—I'll answer no such impertinent question, Mr. ——.

Counsel—Really Miss ——, you seem determined to be very saucy to day.

Witness—That is the only way to deal with such persons as you.

Counsel—Come, come, now, Miss ——, do tell us whether you would accept of a husband if you had another offer of one?

Witness—That would depend on circumstances, Mr. ——. I certainly would not accept of such a conceited, impertinent fellow as you.

Counsel—Stay, stay, Miss ——, it's time enough to refuse me when I offer myself to you.

Witness—O, but I wish to tell you in time, that you may save yourself the trouble.

Here a loud peal of laughter again burst simultaneously from all parts of the court; and Mr. ——, finding he had caught a tartar, pro-

ceeded to examine the witness as to the real points of the case, which related to the stealing of some articles from a dwelling-house.

The dexterity which some of the younger prisoners—for those, I have always observed, who are from fourteen to eighteen years of age are usually the cleverest — display in cross-examining the witnesses against them is often surprising. I have seen many prisoners manifest an acuteness in this respect which I have never seen surpassed by the examinations of the most practised counsel. I have frequently on such occasions thought with myself, that some unlucky star must have been in the ascendant at the time of their birth, and that instead of being pickpockets they ought to have been lawyers. From the numerous specimens I have seen of dexterity of this kind on the part of juvenile offenders during their trials at the Old Bailey, I am convinced that Botany Bay swarms with legal geniuses of the highest order, though circumstances, unfortunately for themselves, have prevented their talents being turned into their

proper channel. At the December sessions of last year, a striking illustration of the singular acuteness displayed at their trials by some juvenile offenders, was given. Four prisoners, whose several ages varied from fifteen to eighteen, were put to the bar, charged with having stolen a chest of tea from a cart in Shoreditch. The policeman who made the discovery was only, in the first instance, able to take one of the number into custody. The others were soon after apprehended, and were all lodged in the station-house. There was no question as to the identity of the one the watchman caught in the act, but the other three stoutly declared they knew nothing of each other. Two out of the three subjected the policeman to one of the most rigid and ingenious cross-examinations I have ever witnessed; but I am not, at this distance of time, able to give the questions and answers in that connexion which could convey any idea of the acuteness of the prisoners. I remember that one fact on which the policeman laid great stress, as proving that the prisoners

were all connected with the theft, was, that on going to the watchhouse at a late hour in the evening, he overheard one say to the others—"Vy, if so be as one on us go, we'll all on us go;" on which another struck up some sort of a song the chorus of which was—"Across the water we vill go—across the water we vill go." This the policeman understood to mean that they all expected transportation. He added, that afterwards the whole four joined with a heartiness he had never seen surpassed, in some flash song. One of the prisoners, the one who stood next to the jury, on the witness concluding this part of his evidence, observed, that he had a question or two to ask the policeman. "Very well," said the Recorder, "put them to him."

Prisoner—Vaut makes you think that ven one said, "Vy, if so be as one on us go, ve'll all on us go," it meant as how we expected to be transported?

Witness—I don't know; but that was my impression.

Prisoner—Vas it not as likely as how we

meant that all on us were to go to our trial at this ere bar?

The witness here hesitated a few seconds, and the prisoner winked knowingly at the other prisoner nearest to him.

Prisoner—Might it not, I say, a' meant this ere Old Bailey?

Witness—It might, certainly; but my impression was, that it meant what I have said.

Prisoner—It might, certainly: please, my Lord, to take that down. We have nothink to do with this ere person's impressions.

The prisoner pointed to the witness as he spoke, and gave another significant twinkle of his eye to his fellow-prisoner farthest off.

Prisoner—You said as how you heard one of us sing something about going across the vater.

Witness—I did.

Prisoner—Vell, and vaut about it? Is one's liberty to be taken from him 'cos as how he sings a song? And, my Lord, I should jist like to ax your Lordship vether a person cannot sing

about crossing the vater without being sent across the vater?

A shout of laughter followed the latter question.

Recorder—That, certainly, will not of itself be the means of sending you across the seas.

Prisoner—Thank your Lordship. Jist one or two more questions to you (addressing himself to the witness). You said as how you heard all on us a singing a flash song.

Witness—I did.

Prisoner—Vaut was the song about?

Witness—I don't know that.

Prisoner—Can you repeat any part of it?

Witness—I cannot.

Prisoner—How then do you know as how it was a song at all?

Witness—Because you were all singing it.

Prisoner—How do you know as how it vas a flash song?

Witness—That was my impression.

Prisoner here turned from the witness to the

Recorder and the jury, and exclaimed—"My Lord, and gentilmen of the jury, you see as how 'es come to impressions again." Then fixing his eye again stedfastly on the prisoner, he said—"Sir, do you know vat flash means?"

Witness—I do.

Prisoner—Then per'aps as how you vould have no objection to let's hear it: vat is flash?

The witness hesitated for some time.

Prisoner—He's a takin' good time to give us his answer any how, observed the prisoner, looking expressively at the jury.

Prisoner—I ax'd you vaut the meanin' of flash is?

Witness (faulteringly)—Why it means—it just means—flash.

Loud laughter followed from all parts of the court, in which the bench joined.

Prisoner (addressing himself to the court)—My Lord, and gentlemen, there's a witness for you to swear away our rights and liberties. I von't ax that ere witness no more questions.

The witness then withdrew, and others were examined. When the whole evidence was taken, the same prisoner went as minutely into it as the most experienced judge could have done, and pointed out with an ingenuity and clearness I have never seen surpassed, the slightest discrepancy or improbability that could be detected in it. It was still, however, too strong for him and his companions in crime. A verdict of guilty was returned, and the sentence of the court was, that "Across the water they should go."

On some occasions, I have seen clever prisoners overreach themselves at the Old Bailey, and undo by a single unguarded expression, all that they had done in their own favour by the ingenious manner in which they had cross-examined the leading witnesses against them. About six months ago a little rascal, not more than fourteen years of age, was charged by a merchant in Long Acre with having broken into his premises at twelve o'clock at night, and stolen various articles. Having been alarmed in the

act, he escaped into the street, but being closely pursued was soon taken. He stoutly denied having committed the offence for which he was arraigned; and said he would soon convince the jury, by putting a few questions to the prosecutor, that he had been taken up by mistake. The prisoner then put a string of questions to the prosecutor, which had the effect of causing some doubt in the minds of the jury as to the identity of the offender. After having finished his cross-examination, the little fellow said he hoped he had got enough out of the witness to show that no reliance could be placed on his testimony, and then observed with an air of supreme scorn towards the prosecutor, and of infinite self-importance, that he had done with him. The prosecutor was in the act of quitting the witness-box, when the prisoner, addressing himself to the Recorder, said—"My Lord, though I'll have nothing more to do with that person," looking contemptuously towards the prosecutor, "per'aps you will ask him a single question."

"O certainly," said his Lordship; "as many as you please. Prosecutor, stand up again."

The prosecutor stood up again in the witness-box.

"Now, then," said his Lordship, addressing himself to the prisoner, "what question would you wish me to put to the witness?"

"Just be kind enough to ax him whether the robbery was committed in the dark or by candle-light," said the prisoner.

"Witness, you hear the question of the prisoner: was the robbery committed in the dark or by candle light?" inquired the Recorder.

"In the dark, my Lord," answered the prosecutor.

"O what a ——————— lie," shouted the prisoner; "for I had a lighted candle ven I did it."

The court was convulsed with laughter at the singular rudeness and energy of manner with which the juvenile rogue made the remark.

The unfortunate admission he had thus unguardedly made flashed across his mind in a moment. He asked no more questions. There were two other witnesses against him; but they had it all their own way: he awaited his doom in sullen silence. That doom was twelve months imprisonment in the House of Correction.

It may be right to mention, that the cause of the prosecutor's mistake about the business was, that though the prisoner had a lighted candle with him when in the act of committing the theft, his being suddenly alarmed by steps on the staircase, caused him to extinguish the light while hurrying to the door, so that the prosecutor did not see it.

By far the most amusing scene which has occurred for a considerable time past, was exhibited a few years ago. Two fellows had been put to the bar on a charge of stealing three geese. Three of these fowls had been stolen from the prosecutor, and the same number of geese had been found in the possession of the prisoners on

the following day. The whole question, therefore, before the court turned on the identity of the geese. The prisoners knew that it would be much more difficult to establish the identity of the "articles" stolen in this case than it was usually found to be in the case of other articles. They consequently declared in the most positive manner, that the geese which had been found in their possession, were not, and never had been, the property of the prosecutor. The principal witness as to the fact of identity was the prosecutor's daughter, and she being rather a soft young woman who had been all her life in the country, the fellows thought they could easily, to use their own expression, "bother" her when in the witness-box. On being put there, the first important question the judge put was,—"Are you quite sure that these three birds are your father's property?"

Witness—Quite sure, my Lord.

Judge—As most geese are so like each other, have you any peculiar means of identi-

fying those found in the possession of the prisoners as having been part of the contents of your father's dairy?

Witness—Yes, my Lord.

Judge—Would you be so good to as tell us how you know they are your father's geese?

Witness—I know by their cackle, my Lord.

Here a burst of laughter proceeded from all parts of the court.

Judge—I had always thought there was no great difference in the cackle of geese.

"No more there is, my Lord," interrupted one of the prisoners, in a gruff tone of voice.

Judge (to the prisoner)—Will you allow me to finish what I am going to say?

Prisoner—Certainly, I ax your Lordship's pardon for the hinterrupshin.

Judge—Are you sure you may not be mistaken as to the point, young woman?

Witness—There is no mistake, my Lord.

Judge—Can you describe any peculiarity in the cackle of your father's geese which makes you so confident as to their identity?

The witness was quite confounded by this question. She was silent.

"Oey, show us how your 'uns cackle," exclaimed the same prisoner, looking exultingly in the face of the witness.

The other prisoner rubbed his hands, while there was a most expressive leer in his countenance, at the perplexing request of his associate in crime.

The court was convulsed with laughter, and the simple witness was still more confounded than before. In a short time she partially recovered her presence of mind.

Judge—Do not be alarmed, young woman, the court will not be so unreasonable as to ask you to comply with the prisoner's request and imitate the cackling of a goose. Should you know the birds if you saw them again?

Witness—Yes, my Lord, I should.

Judge—Officer, just produce the geese and show them to the witness. A peal of laughter followed the injunction.

"All of them at once, my Lord?" said the officer.

"No, one goose is enough at a time," observed his Lordship, amidst deafening shouts of laughter.

One of the geese was accordingly taken out of a sort of cage in which the three had been brought to court, and put on the breast of the witness-box, amidst roars of laughter. The way in which the officer held the bird in his hand for fear it should escape, was not the least ludicrous part of the scene.

"Is that one of your father's geese?" asked his Lordship.

The poor girl looked hard at it, and said she thought it was, but was not quite sure unless she heard it cackle.

The goose, as if comprehending in the clearest manner what was going on, uttered a tremendous cackle that instant which made the walls of the court resound again. The poor bird's cackling, however, it is right to add, was immediately drowned amidst the roars of laughter which proceeded from all parts of the house, caused partly by the cackling of the bird and partly by the irresistibly droll effect produced by one

of the officers singing out, "Silence there! Silence in the court!" The poor functionary was standing at the door at the time in earnest conversation with an acquaintance, and consequently very naturally mistook the cackling of a feathered goose for a noise caused by a goose of another description.

"That is one of my father's geese," observed the girl, as soon as the cackling of the bird and the loud laughter in the court, would allow her voice to be heard. "That is one of my father's geese."

"Then, officer, put that one away," said his Lordship, "and produce another."

The goose as in the former case was put on the front of the box, the officer holding it in the same way as before.

"I wonder," said his Lordship, "whether this bird is to afford as prompt an opportunity of identification as the other."

"O!" said the witness, looking at its feet, just as his Lordship made the observation, "O, I can prove this to be my father's goose already."

"What! without cackling?" said the judge.

"Yes, please your Lordship," said the witness.

"Well, in what way?" inquired his Lordship.

"By its feet, my Lord: I marked the webbing of its feet when a gosling."

"You are quite sure that it is your father's property?" said his Lordship.

"Quite sure of it, my Lord."

"Then let that goose be removed. Officer, take away that goose, and produce the other."

The other was on the front of the witness-box in a few seconds.

"Now, young woman, by what means do you propose identifying *this* goose?" inquired his Lordship.

"Why, my Lord," said the girl, taking hold of one of the bird's feet rather hastily, "why, my Lord, I am ——"

Before the last word had fairly escaped the lips of the damsel, the goose gave a violent flap with its wings, and raising a tremendous cackle

escaped out of the officer's hands, and dashed against his Lordship with a force which nearly upset his equilibrium, as it did entirely the gravity of every person in court. Not liking a seat on the bench, the goose next paid a hasty visit to the jury, and then flew through all parts of the court, scattering lawyers' briefs in all directions, and fluttering the spectators as Coriolanus did the Volscians, wherever it went. At last it fell down exhausted among the reporters, who at that time sat immediately under the jury.

The singular simplicity of some witnesses is amusing. They appear quite amazed at what they deem the impertinent curiosity of the counsel in asking them so many questions. Not long ago, a plain country-looking man, of great muscular energy, seemingly about thirty-five years of age, was subjected to a long examination. It was visible to all that he answered every successive question with increased reluctance. At last the counsel, trying to invalidate his testimony, asked him if he had ever been in prison.

"Vat's that you said, Sur?" said he, evidently doubting the fidelity of his ears.

"Have you ever been in prison, Sir?" repeated the counsel.

"Have I ever been in prizzon?" echoed the witness, drawing back his head in amazement and indignation, "Vell, Sur, your assurance beats everything. If I only had you outside, Sur, I'd answer your ——— impertinent question." As the indignant countryman uttered the latter sentence he shook his clenched fist in a significant manner in the face of the affrighted counsel, who was only two yards distant from him.

I have sometimes been amused with the contrast which the eventual communicativeness of witnesses affords to the reserve they show at the commencement of their examination by counsel. About eighteen months ago, one of the leading counsel was endeavouring to demolish the credibility of the testimony of a witness named Goldsmith, by extorting from him an admission of certain facts prejudicial to his own character.

For some time it was with great difficulty the counsel could elicit a single admission from the witness which was of any service to his client. The witness either evaded the question or found it convenient to repeat the *non-mi-ricordo* game. "Ah, master* Goldsmith, I see you're not willing to tell us anything about yourself, but I'll bring it all out before I have done with you; so you may just as well answer my questions at once."

The witness shrugged up his shoulders, just as if he had been about to swallow some most nauseous medicine.

"Come, come, master Goldsmith," resumed the counsel, "come, come, do tell us what you know about certain courts?"

"About certain courts?" answered the witness, hesitatingly, and looking up to the ceiling as if he had been trying to comprehend the counsel's question.

"Aye, about certain courts," repeated the

* The counsel to whom I allude is in the habit of calling all the witnesses hostile to his client by the prefix of "Master."

counsel; "you know there is such a place as the Insolvent Debtors' Court, and there is also this court, the Old Bailey, master Goldsmith."

"O, I see very well what you're driving at Mr.————," said the witness, becoming quite reckless from a conviction of the impossibility of concealing anything—"I see, Sir, what you're driving at. I have passed through the Insolvent Debtors' Court three times. I have been four times in the Court of King's Bench. I have been five times tried in this court on charges of assaults and swindling; on three of these occasions I was acquitted, and the other two found guilty. I was once sentenced to the tread-mill for three months, and another time to the House of Correction for six months. Now, Sir," continued the witness, addressing himself to the counsel, "now Sir, there you have the whole of my character and the leading events of my life. I could not tell you more though you were to question me till this time to-morrow."

"O, I don't want anything more," said the counsel, "that is sufficient; you may sit down, master Goldsmith."

In the examination of policemen as witnesses, I have sometimes seen amusing scenes, chiefly arising from a peculiar way they have of speaking among themselves. Not long ago, one policeman who had assisted with several others in taking an Irishman of great muscular energy into custody, was asked by the judge "whether he made any attempt at resistance?"

"He did, my Lord."

Judge—Do you mean to say that he was violent?

Witness—He was, my Lord.

Judge—Was he very violent?

Witness—He was werry wiolent.

Judge—What did he do? Did he strike any of you?

Witness—He did, my Lord.

Judge—Were the blows severe?

Witness—They were werry sewere.

Judge—Did he knock any of you down?

Witness—Yes, my Lord, he knocked down 175.

Judge (with great emphasis and with marked surprise)—He did what?

Witness—He knocked down 175.

Judge—Are you aware of what you are saying?

Witness—I am, my Lord.

Judge—And you mean to say on your solemn oath, that when the police constables went to take the prisoner at the bar into custody, he knocked down 175.

Witness—I do, my Lord.

Judge—Why, man, you must be out of your senses. The thing's impossible.

Witness—He *did* do it, my Lord.

Judge (throwing himself back in his seat)—I do not, Sir, know what to make of your testimony.

Witness—I've a-spoken nothink but the truth, my Lord.

Judge—What you state, Sir, is a perfect impossibility.

Witness—It's quite true, my Lord.

Judge—Hold your tongue, Sir, don't tell the court any more of such absurdities. Gentlemen, (turning himself to the jury-box,) you have heard

what this witness has stated, and which he still persists in: I am sure you will agree with me that no dependence is to be placed on his testimony.

The jury seemed to *look* the same opinion, though they said nothing. The counsel and all present were also equally at a loss how to reconcile such a fact with the solemn and oft-repeated declarations of the witness.

Judge (to the witness)—You still persist in saying, that the prisoner at the bar, when the police went to take him into custody, knocked down 175?

Witness—I do, my Lord.

Judge—And how long time may he have taken to perform this wonderful feat.

Witness—He did it in a few seconds, my Lord.

Judge (to the jury)—You see, gentlemen, it's of no use to proceed further with this witness. I am sure you must agree with me, that no reliance whatever is to be placed on anything he has stated this day.

The foreman of the jury here inquired of the judge whether he might ask the witness one or two questions.

"O certainly," answered the judge.

Foreman of the Jury (to the witness)—You say that the prisoner knocked down 175 policemen. Will you be kind enough ———

"O no, Sir," interrupted the witness, "O no, Sir, I did not say that."

"Well, I appeal to the court," said the juryman, "whether that was not what you stated."

"You certainly said so," observed the judge, addressing himself to the witness.

"No, my Lord, I did not say that."

"Why, do you mean to tell us that you did not swear that the prisoner knocked down 175 policemen?" said the judge, looking the witness sternly in the face.

"Certainly, my Lord: I only said that he knocked down 175."

"Why, the man doesn't appear to be in his senses. Why, gentlemen," addressing himself

to the jury, "why, gentlemen, he has repeated the same thing just now."

"No, my Lord, certainly not. He only knocked down one," observed the witness.

"Only one! What then," said the judge, sternly, "what, then, did you mean by saying 175?"

"Why, what was the policeman's number, my Lord? He was 175 of the G division."

The bursts of laughter which followed this explanation were altogether deafening, in which the judge and the jury heartily joined.

But some amusing scenes are occasionally witnessed in the Old Bailey before the trials: I mean while the process of "swearing in the jury" is being gone through. One cannot help admiring the ingenuity which is displayed in assigning grounds for exemption from the duties of jurors. One of the most laughable affairs of this kind occurred a short time since. On the name of an Essex farmer being called, a plain blunt man stepped into the witness-box, and being duly sworn that he would speak

the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so far as it should be asked him, the judge accosted him with the usual question of—"Well, what is the ground on which you claim to be exempted?"

"I am a farmer, my Lord," was the answer.

"Well, but you do not mean to tell the court that you ought to be exempted because you are a farmer?"

The Essex man was silent.

"That is no reason at all why you should be exempted. Almost all our country jurors are farmers. Have you any other ground of exemption to state?" said the judge.

"Yes, my Lord."

"Well, let us hear it?"

"My services are required at home, my Lord."

"In what way and for what reason?" inquired his Lordship.

"Because there is a great deal of illness, my Lord."

"I am sorry to hear that; what may be the extent of the illness?" said the judge.

"Why, my Lord, there are no fewer than six all laid up at home."

"That is a very extensive illness, indeed," observed the judge.

"It is, indeed, my Lord," said the other, with a deep sigh, and looking with a downcast air on the breast of the box.

"Are they *very* ill?" inquired his Lordship, who is a very humane man.

"They are, indeed, my Lord."

"Not dangerously so, I hope?"

"I have reason to fear the worst, my Lord: I have, indeed."

"There are no deaths, I hope," said the judge, in a very sympathetic tone and with a very sympathetic expression of countenance.

"Yes, my Lord, there has been one," said the other, looking most sorrowfully towards the floor.

"Pray how long ago is it since that calamity occurred?"

"Only last week, my Lord."

"And you are apprehensive that others are dangerously ill?"

"I am, indeed, your Lordship," said the Essex man, with another deep sigh.

"This poor man is suffering great family affliction," whispered the judge to the alderman who was sitting beside him.

"It is one of the most melancholy cases I ever heard of," responded the city functionary.

"We must excuse this unfortunate man," added the judge.

"O most certainly," said the alderman.

"You are ex——; stay just for one moment," said the judge, before he had finished the sentence excusing the party—"Stay for one moment. Are there any at all at home in good health?"

"O no, my Lord," answered the other, giving a most touching shake of the head," O no, they are *all* ill."

"Then, I suppose, your farming operations are at a complete stand-still?"

"They are, indeed, my Lord. Nothing has been done for the last eight days."

"Of course, you have a doctor attending them?"

"O yes, my Lord, the best horse-doctor in the country."

"The best what?" said the judge, looking the farmer as significantly in the face as if at a loss to decide in his own mind whether the latter had really uttered the words, or whether his own ears had not deceived him.

"The best horse-doctor in the country, my Lord."

"Why, the man is clearly out of his senses; his afflictions have deranged his mind;" observed the alderman to the judge, in a whisper.

"He certainly *talks* like an insane man; but he does not *look* like one," answered the judge. "I will ask him another question or two. Are they," turning to the farmer, "are they all confined to bed?"

"To bed, my Lord!" said the Essex farmer, with a look of infinite surprise.

"Yes, to bed, when they are so ill as you represent."

"O dear no, my Lord, none of them are in bed."

"Then they surely cannot be so ill as you say?"

"They are, indeed, your Lordship."

"You astonish me. Do they, then, rise and go to bed at the usual hours?" inquired the judge.

"Why, my Lord, they never go to bed at all," answered the Essex man, evidently much surprised at the question of his Lordship.

"Not to bed at all!" exclaimed the judge, looking the party with infinite amazement in the face.

"Never, my Lord; not one of them was ever in bed in their lives."

"I am afraid," whispered the alderman into the ear of the judge, "that what I before stated is too true; the poor man's afflictions have impaired his intellects."

"It certainly is very extraordinary," observed his Lordship.

"Attend, my man," said the judge, evidently

resolved to clear up the mystery some way or other,—" Attend for one moment; are they, then, confined to the house?"

" To the house, my Lord!" answered the farmer, quite as much surprised as before,—" to the house! They were never in the house at all."

" They are never what?" asked the judge, his astonishment waxing still greater and greater.

He looked the alderman in the face; on which the latter, with much self-complacency observed, " It's just what I said: the poor man's calamities have deranged his intellects."

" Never in the house at all, my Lord."

" O," said his Lordship, as if a solution of the enigma had suddenly shot athwart his mind, " O, I see how it is, though you say they are at home, perhaps they are in the hospital."

" In the hospital!" exclaimed the farmer, with great emphasis and amazement, " no, my Lord, none of them ever crossed an hospital door."

" Then where are they; in the name of won-

der?" said the judge, with some haste, his surprise being now wound up to the highest pitch.

"Why, my Lord, they are all in the stable, to be sure," was the answer.

"They are where?" said the judge, rising partially from his seat in the greatness of his amazement, and looking the farmer hard in the face.

"In the stable, my Lord," repeated the Essex man.

The judge looked at the alderman, the alderman looked at the counsel at the table below, and the counsel and everybody else in the court looked at one another.

"Are you aware of what you are saying?" inquired his Lordship, with great seriousness.

"Perfectly so, my Lord."

"And you mean to say that your sick family are all in the stable?"

"My *family*, my Lord!" said the farmer, overwhelmed with amazement at the question; "no,

not my family, but my six horses, who are ill of the influenza."*

It is impossible to describe the shouts of laughter with which the whole court were convulsed for full five minutes after the farmer gave this last answer.

Many amusing scenes used to occur during the Old Bailey proceedings, when the late Mr. Justice Buller presided. The remarks which he was in the habit of making while the cases were proceeding with naturally led to this.

Of these scenes, however, I do not mean to speak at length. I mention his name with the view of stating that it was a common practice of his to anticipate the question which counsel meant to put to the witnesses, and to let observations drop in the course of the trial which clearly showed that he knew what would be the result. It was observable, however, that he did this most frequently in those cases where a ver-

* This was some years ago, when a great many horses throughout the country were seriously ill of this disease.

dict of guilty was likely to be returned. Hence his name became proverbial among those of the lower orders in the habit of frequenting the Old Bailey proceedings, as "the judge vot condemned men before they were tried." This piece of information was communicated to himself one day, in the latter part of his life, under very amusing circumstances. Being in want of a horse, and intending to purchase one, he stepped on one occasion into a repository to see whether any one would suit him. He was at this time dressed in a blue coat, leather breeches, top-boots of a very antiquated make, and wore a three-cornered hat. His appearance was consequently so different from what it was when presiding at the Old Bailey, when he had on his wig and was muffled up in his robes of office, that even those in the habit of most frequently seeing him at the latter place, would have no chance of recognising him without an unusually close scrutiny of his features. On entering the place, he inquired of a horse-jockey he saw rubbing down a good-looking animal, whether he

had got any superior horses of a particular description.

"This is a prime un, Sir; I'll be bound there's ne'er a better in Lunnun," said the jockey, meaning the animal he was rubbing down.

"I should like to see how he runs with a rider on his back," said Mr. Justice Buller.

"That you shall do presently," said the jockey, leaping on the horse's back. "There's not a better running animal than this ere 'os in the kingdom," he continued, applying his heels, in the absence of spurs, to the sides of the beast.

"Stop, stop, my man," exclaimed Mr. Justice Buller, before the horse had proceeded a dozen steps; "stop, stop, my man, that horse won't do."

"Von't do!" said the jockey, stopping the horse and eying the justice with a most expressive glance from top to toe;" "Von't do! vy, I'll be blowed, old chap, if you bean't like Judge Buller, who condemns the poor coves* before he

* Prisoners.

tries them. Come, old boy, you'd better not try any more of this ere gammon again; if you do, I'm blessed if you don't cotch it."

Mr. Justice Buller used to tell the story with great zest.

I have spoken, in a previous part of the chapter, of the indifference with which some of the more hardened of the criminals receive their sentences. I have repeatedly seen them ironically thank the judge for transportation, and tell him that they felt particularly obliged to him. On some occasions their remarks are exceedingly witty. Some years ago, an Irishman, on being sentenced to transportation for life, accosted the judge with, "Is there anything I can do for your honour in Botany, since it's myself would have plaisur in obleeging your honour in that same place?" "Remove him from the bar," said the judge to the officer. "Well, then, your honour," said Paddy, "I'll send you home a monkey to divert your honour, at any rate."

Another Irishman, on being sentenced to transportation for life across the seas, turned

back, after being removed a few paces from the bar, and looking the judge significantly in the face, said, "Will your honour allow me to spake one word?"

"Certainly," said the judge, thinking he was about to make confession of the crime of which he had been found guilty.

"Well, then, your honour, it's myself will be happy to carry out letters to any of your honour's friends in Botany Bay."

"Take him away," said the judge, addressing the officer."

"Throth, and that's the way in which your honour rewards my politeness, is it?" said Pat, on being dragged away by the collar from the dock.

In addition to the scenes which so often occur in the course of the examination of witnesses, there are occasionally some of an amusing nature, which take place from the loss of temper on the part of the counsel on the opposite sides. Such scenes, however, have not been so frequent of late years, as they used to be.

When Mr. A——, who died some years ago, was practising in the Old Bailey, he and another of the counsel almost invariably quarrelled when they happened to be on different sides. And their quarrels were not like the sham quarrels so common among lawyers. They were quarrels of the right sort, as one of the parties used to call them. Not content with fighting each other with their tongues, they had recourse to more solid weapons. Walking canes, umbrellas, books, or anything else of a substantial kind, that was nearest at the time, were put in requisition; and with these they used to belabour each other in open court. The most singular feature in the implacable enmity with which the gentlemen in question regarded each other, and the endless insults which passed between them, was, that neither ever sent a challenge to the other to fight a duel, though often advised to do so by there friends as the best way of settling their disputes. Each excused himself on the ground that there was something so disreputable and ungentlemanly in

the conduct of the other, that it would be lowering his own character to go out with him.

The counsel in the Old Bailey are occasionally very fond of trying their hands at puns. The best one I have heard perpetrated there for some time past owes its authorship to Mr. Charles Phillips. Not long since a prisoner was tried for unlawfully obtaining money by falsely representing himself as being an officer in some regiment of horse, the name of which I forget. After the case was finished, Mr. Common Sergeant Mirehouse, who presided on the occasion, said it consisted with his personal knowledge, that the prisoner was not an officer in the regiment in question; for that he himself had once had the honour of holding a commission in the same regiment. On this Mr. Charles Phillips remarked—"Although your Lordship has changed your position, it is clear that you have not been promoted; but that, on the contrary, you have been reduced from the rank of a captain to that of a "Common Sergeant." This pun, as Lord Brougham would

say, is by no means amiss; it told with excellent effect.

There is one eccentric character whom it were unpardonable to pass over in a chapter devoted to the Old Bailey: I allude to Mr. Curtis, who is as constantly to be seen in the New Court as the judge himself. Mr. Curtis is known to everybody in and about the place, and nobody can know him without being attached to him. A more honest, kind-hearted, or inoffensive creature, does not exist. For nearly a quarter of a century has he been in constant attendance at the Old Bailey, from the opening to the close of each session, never, so far as I am aware, being absent, with the exception of two occasions when attending the county assizes. He writes short-hand; and has, I understand, a stenographical work in the press, to be called "Short-hand made Shorter." He is so passionately fond of writing the trials, that he takes down, for his own special amusement, every case verbatim which comes before the New Court. What his horror of the Old Court

arises from, I have never been able to learn; but one might as soon expect to find the Bishop of London in a Dissenting chapel, as to find Mr. Curtis in the Old Court. He is celebrated for his early rising: four o'clock in the morning he considers a late hour. It is quite an era in his life to lie in bed till five. By seven, he has completed his morning journeys, which usually embrace a distance, including doubles—for he is particularly fond of going over the same ground twice, if not thrice, in a morning—of from six to eight miles. Among the places visited, Farringdon Market, Covent Garden Market, Hungerford Market, and Billingsgate, are never under any circumstances omitted. Farringdon Market has the honour of the first visit, because, as good luck (for it) would have it, he chances to reside in that neighbourhood. His own notion is, that he has walked as much within the last thirty years, before seven in the morning, as would have made the circuit of the globe three or four times. He is, perhaps, the most inveterate pedestrian alive; locomotion seems to be

a necessity of his nature. It is the severest punishment that could be inflicted on him to be obliged to remain for any length of time in one place. There is only one exception to this rule; and that is, when he is taking down the trials at the Old Bailey. He regards it as the greatest favour that could be conferred on him, to be asked to walk ten or twelve miles by an acquaintance. He frequently inquires of his friends, whether they have occasion to go to any of the villages in the neighbourhood of London; adding, that in that case, he will be happy to take "a step" with them. He some time since kindly offered to give me a "full, true, and particular account" of the eventful vicissitudes of his life, if I would take a walk out to Hampstead, or any other village in the vicinity of London, with him. I would with infinite pleasure have accepted his offer, but that it chanced to be a very rainy evening. He is particularly partial to wet weather, and is as fond of a rainy day as if he were a duck. He is never so comfortable as when thoroughly

drenched. Thunder and lightning throw him into perfect ecstasies. Some years since, he luxuriated for some hours on Dover cliff, in one of the most tremendous thunder-storms ever witnessed in this country. A year or two ago, he walked down to Croydon and back again on the three consecutive days of the fair; making, with his locomotive achievements in Croydon, a distance of nearly fifty miles a day; and this without any other motive than that of gratifying his pedestrian propensities. He has a perfect horror of cabs, coaches, omnibuses, and all sorts of vehicles; nobody, I believe, ever saw him in one. Rather than submit to be wheeled through the streets in any vehicle whatever, he would a thousand times over encounter the fate of poor Falstaff when Madams Ford and Page, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," caused him to be pitched out of a clothes'-basket into the river Thames. I have my doubts, indeed, whether a submersion in the Thames, or in any other water, would be any punishment to Mr. Curtis at all; for, judging from his extreme partiality

to heavy showers of rain, it would look as if he were, to a certain extent, an amphibious being. This much is certain, for he has often told me the thing with infinite glee himself, that he was once thrown into a pond without suffering any inconvenience. The benefits of air and exercise are manifest in his cheerful disposition, and healthy-looking, though somewhat weather-beaten countenance. I have often told him that he is the happiest little thick-built man alive.

He possesses a singularly strong constitution. I have spoken of his early rising; I should have mentioned, in proof of the vigorousness of his frame, that he is also late in going to bed. On an average, he has not, for the last twenty years, slept above four hours in the twenty-four. He is often weeks without going to bed at all. It sufficeth him, as Wordsworth would say, to have two or three hours' doze in his arm-chair, and with his clothes on. In the year 1834, he was seized with the ambition of performing an unusual feat in this way. He aspired to the reputation of being able to sit up one hundred

consecutive nights and days, without stretching himself on a bed, or in any way putting himself into a horizontal position, even for one moment. He actually did, incredible as it may appear, accomplish the extraordinary undertaking. For one century of consecutive nights and days, as he himself loves to express it, Mr. Curtis neither put off his clothes to lie down in bed, or anywhere else, for a second. Any little sleep he had during the time, was in the shape of a doze, as just mentioned, in his arm-chair.

His taste for executions, and for the society of persons sentenced to death, is remarkable. He has been present at every execution in the metropolis and its immediate neighbourhood, for the last quarter of a century. This may appear so improbable a statement, that it may be proper to mention I have it from his own lips; and nothing in the world would induce him to state what is not true. Nay, so powerful is his propensity for witnessing executions, that, some years since, he actually walked down before breakfast to Chelmsford, which is twenty-nine

miles from London, to be present at the execution of Captain Moir. For a great many years past he has not only heard the condemned sermon preached in Newgate, but has spent many hours in their gloomy cells, with the leading men who have been executed in London during that time. He was a great favourite with poor Fauntleroy. Many an hour did Mr. Curtis spend in Newgate with that unfortunate man. He was with him a considerable part of the day previous to his execution. With Corder, too, of Red Barn notoriety, he contracted a warm friendship; sleeping, I think he has told me, repeatedly on the same bed as that unhappy man had been accustomed to sleep on. Immediately on the discovery of the murder of Maria Martin, he hastened down to the scene, and there remained till the execution of William Corder, making a period of several weeks. He afterwards wrote "Memoirs of Corder," which extended to upwards of three hundred pages. The work was published by the present Lord Mayor, then Mr. Kelly; and being published in sixpenny numbers, had

a large sale. Three portraits, all engraved on one piece of plate, embellished the work. They were portraits of William Corder, Maria Martin, and Mr. Curtis himself. I believe this is the only literary work of Mr. Curtis; he is proud of it: nothing pleases him better than to be called the biographer of Corder.

By some unaccountable sort of fatality, Mr. Curtis, where he is unknown, has always had the mortification of being mistaken, under very awkward circumstances, for other parties. He was never at Dover but once in his life, and on that occasion, he was locked up all night on suspicion of being a spy. When he went down to Chelmsford, to be present at the execution of the unfortunate captain, whose name I have already mentioned, he engaged a bed early in the morning the day before the execution, at the Three Cups Tavern. On returning to the inn in the evening, he saw everybody stare at him as hard as if he had been a giraffe. The female servants rushed out of his sight the moment they fixed their eyes on him. Among

the men-servants, in addition to the feeling of horror with which they clearly regarded him, he heard a variety of whispers, without being able to understand the why or wherefore. At last, the landlady of the Three Cups advanced a few steps towards him, though still keeping at a distance of some yards, and said in tremulous accents and with quivering frame,—"We cannot give you a bed here; when I promised you one, I did not know the house was so full as it is."

"Ma'am," said Mr. Curtis, indignantly, at the same time pulling himself up—"Ma'am, I have taken my bed, and I insist on having it."

"I'm very sorry for it, but you cannot sleep here to-night."

"I *will* sleep here to-night; I've engaged my bed, and refuse it me at your peril," said Mr. Curtis, thrusting his right hand into the breast of his waistcoat, and assuming an aspect of offended dignity.

"It's impossible, it's impossible, it cannot

be," observed the landlady of the Three Cups, with great eagerness and emphasis.

"Why, madam? I should like to know the reason *why?*" taking off his glasses, and buttoning his coat.

"I'll pay the price of your bed in any other place, if you'll only go and sleep somewhere else," was the only answer of the relict of the late Mr. Boniface.

"No, ma'am," said Mr. Curtis, with an edifying energy, the brilliant indignation of his eye proclaiming with expressive eloquence, the spirit with which he resented the affront offered to him, "No, ma'am, I insist on my rights as a *public* man; I have a duty to perform to-morrow." As he spoke, he took three or four hasty paces through the room.

"It's all true. He says he's a public man, and that he has a duty to perform," were words which every person in the room exchanged in suppressed whispers with each other.

The waiter now stepped up to Mr. Curtis,

and taking him aside, said—"The reason why Missus won't give you no bed, is because you're the executioner;" and, as he uttered the words, he drew himself back from Mr. Curtis, as if the latter had been a walking cholera. Mr. Curtis was on the first announcement of the thing somewhat astounded; but in a few moments he laughed heartily at the mistake. "I'll soon convince you of your error, ma'am," said Mr. Curtis, walking out of the house. He returned in about ten minutes with a respectable gentleman of the place, with whom he was acquainted; and the gentleman having spoken to the fact of his identity being different from what had been supposed, the landlady made a thousand apologies for the mistake, and as the only reparation she could make him, she gave him the best bed in the Three Cups Tavern.

This was, in all conscience, a sufficiently awkward mistake; but it was nothing to one which was made on another occasion. I have already mentioned the zest with which he enjoyed the luxury of sleeping in Corder's bed. That,

however, was not enough; nor did it satisfy him to spend night after night with him in prison. He accompanied Corder to his trial, and stood up close beside him at the bar all the time the trial lasted. A limner had been sent from Ipswich to take a portrait of Corder, for one of the newspapers of that place. And what did he do? Nobody, I am sure, would guess. Why, the stupid animal, as Mr. Curtis justly calls him, actually took a sketch of Mr. Curtis himself, mistaking him for Corder; and in the next number of the provincial print, Mr. Curtis figured at full length as the murderer of Maria Martin! Mr. Curtis regards this as one of the most amusing incidents in his life; and I speak seriously when I say, that while expressing his anxiety that I would omit none of those adventures of his which I have here given, he was particularly solicitous that this incident should have a place. I promised I would attend to his wishes. I have kept my word.

I have glanced at Mr. Curtis's excellent moral character. He has often told me that he has

done everything in his power, though without effect, to induce the authorities of Newgate to write in legible letters above the door of every cell in that prison, the scriptural axiom—"The way of transgressors is hard." Here Mr. Curtis's judgment is at fault. It were of little use to tell the unhappy criminals, after they are shut up in their gloomy cells, that the way of transgressors is hard; they find that it is so in their bitter experience. If any way could be devised of convincing them of the fact when meditating the commission of a crime which would send them thither, there would be sound philosophy in the thing. In the case to which Mr. Curtis alludes, it were only an illustration of the old adage of "After death the doctor."

While thus referring to the excellent moral character of Mr. Curtis, I beg I may be understood as speaking with all sincerity when I say, that notwithstanding all his eccentricities, which, by the way, are of the most harmless kind,—he has done a great deal of good to prisoners sentenced to death. I speak within bounds when

I mention that he has, from first to last, spent more than a hundred nights with unhappy prisoners under sentence of death, conversing with them with all seriousness and with much intelligence, on the great concerns of that eternal world on whose brink they were standing. I saw a long and sensible letter which the unhappy man named Pegsworth, who was executed in March last for the crime of murder, addressed a few days before his death to Mr. Curtis, and in which he most earnestly thanked Mr. C. for all the religious instructions and admonitions he had given him, adding, that he believed he had derived great spiritual benefit from them.

There are some other characters of some eccentricity to be seen at the Old Bailey; but they are not worthy of a special notice.

Of the way in which the criminal justice of the country is administered at the Central Criminal Courts, which is now another name for the Old Bailey, there is not, nor can there be, two opinions. That is a point, therefore, on

which it would be unnecessary to make any observations; but I cannot close the chapter without paying the tribute of my special admiration to the Recorder of London—on whom devolves the most onerous duties as judge, at the Old Bailey—for the way in which he discharges the functions of his office. He presides during the greater part of the sessions in the Old Court, where, as before observed, the most important cases are tried. The Hon. Mr. Law has now filled the situation of Recorder for the city of London for about four years. He is son of the late, and brother of the present, Lord Ellenborough. He is well versed in the criminal jurisprudence of the country; and the soundness of his judgment is admitted by all. But these are not the qualities in the judicial character of Mr. Law, on which I would chiefly delight to dwell. The qualities to which I allude are chiefly of a moral kind. It has been my fortune to see a great many judges in Scotland as well as in England, presiding in courts of justice; but I have never seen one who seemed to me to be

more deeply or more permanently impressed with a sense of the serious responsibility of his situation, than the present Recorder of London. He unites in a rare degree the gravity of the judge with the mildness and manners of a gentleman. He is ever anxious to anticipate the wishes of the unfortunate parties at the bar; and to afford them every opportunity of doing everything which the law allows, to procure their acquittal. He listens most patiently to everything they have to say, at whatever sacrifice of his own time, and however great the amount of personal labour to himself. He does this even when his most decided impression is, that there is not the slightest chance of an acquittal. A more humane judge never sat in a court of justice: you see kindness in his looks; humanity shows itself in every word he utters. His leanings, wherever the case can admit of leaning, are always on mercy's side; and nothing could be more affecting than the way in which he passes sentence in all those cases in which the magnitude of the offence or the serious

criminality of the prisoner, has rendered it necessary that an example should be made to deter others from pursuing the same course of conduct. It is plain in all such cases that he is doing violence to his own feelings, in order that he may faithfully discharge his duty to his country. I have reason to believe that his admonitions to prisoners, in passing sentence, have more frequently been attended with beneficial effects to the unhappy individuals themselves, as well as to the spectators, than those of any other judge who has sat in any of our criminal courts, for a long series of years.

CHAPTER IV.

NEWGATE.

Origin of the name—Erection of the building—Description of the interior—Classification of the prisoners—The chapel—"Condemned Sermons."—General Remarks—State of a prisoner's mind the night before his execution—Preparations for an execution—Miscellaneous observations.

NEWGATE is situated close to the Old Bailey: it may be said, indeed, to form a part of the same building. There is an open space of about thirty yards square between them; but the two places are joined together by a strong high wall. Newgate, as everybody knows, is the great metropolitan prison for criminal offences. It is the largest prison in the country, perhaps in the world. I shall afterwards have occasion to

speak of its size in connexion with the number of prisoners that are sometimes confined in it at once. It is a large massy building. Its exterior has all the appearance of an indefinite durability. One would suppose that even Time himself, whom Lord Bacon personifies as the great innovator, could hardly make an impression on Newgate. It is supposed to have derived its name from the circumstance of a gate leading through the city walls having been put up in the thirteenth century,—which was called New Gate, to distinguish it from Lud Gate. It is generally believed by metropolitan antiquarians to have been the principal prison in London for upwards of five centuries past. The previous Newgate was destroyed by the great fire of 1666. The present building was commenced in 1776. Beckford, the well known patriot, and father of the celebrated author of "Vathek," the builder of Fonthill Abbey, having been Lord Mayor at the time, was chosen by his fellow citizens to lay the foundation stone. What the expenses of the building were, I have not

been able to ascertain; but they must have been very great; for independently of what was contributed towards them by the corporation of London—to whose exertions in the matter the citizens owed the erection of the edifice—government made a grant of 50,000*l.* to assist in building the place. I shall, by-and-bye, have to speak of the existing state of the interior of Newgate. Before the erection of the present edifice, Newgate was so unhealthy a place as to prove fearfully destructive of human life. It was scarcely ever without some fatal disease, generated by the want of air, the putrid water the prisoners had to drink, their crowding together, and the utter disregard of cleanliness manifested by those who had charge of the apartments. There was then a well-known disease peculiar to the place called the gaol distemper. Of this disease, a popular writer of the middle of last century says, that the prisoners daily died by dozens, and that cart-loads of men were carried out and thrown into a pit in the churchyard of Christ Church. Thus the pestilence

not only often anticipated the work of the executioner on those who would have been doomed to expiate their crimes by their lives, but others, whose offences were of so venial a nature as not to expose them to capital punishment, were, in many cases, swept away within a few days of their crossing the precincts of the prison. And once dead, not the slightest decency was observed as to the disposal of their bodies. The same authority states that they were thrown into the earth as if they had been so many brute beasts. Nor was the gaol distemper, of which I have been speaking, confined to the inmates of the prison: it sometimes went beyond the walls. The effluvia which was emitted in hot weather was so great and offensive, that the inhabitants in the neighbourhood were constrained to memorialise the government on the subject. They, in many cases, caught the infection. On one occasion it penetrated into the sessions house, and produced the most frightful results. Two of the judges, the lord mayor, several of the jury, and various other persons, to the number

of sixty altogether, were seized by the disease, and suddenly carried off by it. It was its fatal consequences to others which first specially attracted the attention of the corporation of the city to the horrible state of the interior of Newgate, and led to those exertions on their part which ended in the erection of the present edifice,—thus affording another illustration of the scriptural maxim, that good is often brought out of evil.

The present building was scarcely finished, though occupied by several hundred prisoners at the time, when, in the riots of 1780, it was attacked by the mob, who liberated the prisoners and destroyed everything combustible in the place. The injury thus done to the building was repaired at the expense of parliament. The building was completed in 1782. In length, it measures three hundred feet, and the walls are fifty feet in height. At the time I write, the interior is undergoing great alterations. It has often done so before. What, therefore, is true of it as regards the arrangements, the classifica-

tion of the prisoners, &c., at one time, is not so at another. Under the existing arrangements the interior of the prison is divided into three stations.* The locality of the first of these is the north wing, or that part of the building nearest Smithfield market, which has three yards, with sleeping and day-rooms attached. The first yard and the rooms belonging to it are occupied by grown-up convicts under sentence of transportation; the second yard and rooms, are set apart for the boys, who have also a school-room; the third yard and rooms, are used as the infirmary and convalescent wards for the male prisoners. The second station is in the centre of the building, and has also three yards, with day and sleeping-rooms attached. The first of these yards and rooms are occupied by persons under sentence of imprisonment for misdemeanors and felonies; and the other two yards and rooms are tenanted by those male

*I am here assuming, that the same arrangements in this respect will be continued after the present alterations have been completed.

prisoners who have not yet been tried. The press yard, with the attached cells for the reception of criminals condemned to death—of which cells I shall afterwards have to speak—are also locally connected with this part of Newgate. The remaining or third station forms the south wing, or that part of the building which is nearest to Ludgate Hill. There all the female prisoners are confined. They have two yards allotted them, each of which has sleeping wards and day-rooms attached. One of the two yards is occupied by females who are awaiting their trials. Connected with this department of Newgate, there is a school for girls. The upper story of this yard is used as an infirmary for females. The second yard and attached apartments are reserved for females under sentence of transportation for felonies and misdemeanors.

The number of night-rooms in Newgate is thirty-three. The number of inmates in them, after dark, varies from fifteen to thirty. The number of day-rooms or wards is only ten; so

that when the prison is full, there will sometimes be upwards of forty persons in each. The principal wards and rooms in the several stations of the prison are each about thirty-eight feet in length, and fifteen wide; the smaller ones measure twenty-four by fifteen feet.

The most painfully interesting part of Newgate to a stranger who visits it, is that in which the places, technically called the condemned cells, are situated. These cells are appropriated for the reception of those who are under sentence of death. Of these cells there are three tiers, and in each tier there are five cells, making the entire number of these gloomy abodes fifteen.

They are situated on the north side of the prison, and adjoining the house of the Ordinary, abutting Newgate-street. When a prisoner is convicted of a capital offence he is removed to this part of Newgate, there to remain until the Recorder has made his report to his Majesty. In case of a commutation of sentence, the prisoners are transferred to the transport-yard, pre-

paratory to their removal to the hulks. Those, on the other hand, against whom the fatal sentence is to be carried into execution, are suffered to remain until that moment arrives. In the day-time the prisoners are allowed to congregate together in a large apartment called the day-room; but at night each is shut up in his own cell. The condemned cells are all situated on the first and second floors. Connected, as already stated, with these cells, are two large rooms called day-rooms; one on the ground floor opening into the press-yard, and the other immediately above it. The lower is used by capital convicts; while the upper room is reserved for devotional and sacramental purposes. The condemned cells measure nine feet by seven feet; each of them has a small window guarded with iron stanchions. The windows have severally a sliding shutter to admit light and air, should the prisoner wish it. They are near the ceiling, but do not show more light than is barely sufficient to enable the prisoner to read or write. The great majority of the unhappy inmates are

without education, and of uncultivated habits. They have no means of profitably employing their leisure hours, and consequently chiefly spend their time in the use of the coarsest possible language, and in condemning the laws which have condemned them. There are, however, to this as to every other rule, some exceptions. The walls of each cell being whitewashed every two years, and the prisoners being allowed the use of pencils, some of them give expression to their feelings and sentiments in their peculiar situation, by writing them on the walls. Any person who is permitted to visit Newgate may learn, from the inscriptions on the walls, many interesting facts illustrative of the various phases which human nature assumes. While some of these inscriptions are of a character which show the utter depravity of the parties writing them, there are others which indicate the deepest penitence. Texts of scripture and passages from hymns, are among the modes of expressing their feelings and sentiments most frequently used by the latter class

of prisoners. In some few instances, however, where the parties have a taste for poetry, they give utterance to their views in lines indited by themselves. The following lines were written about twenty years since by a young man then under sentence of death for forgery:—

"Thou hapless wretch! whom justice calls
To dwell within these dreary walls.
Know, guilty man, this very cell
May be to thee the porch to hell!
Thy sins confessed—thy guilt forgiven—
Mysterious change!—it leads to Heaven!"

These lines were written under very peculiar and affecting circumstances. The unhappy man was only twenty-two years of age at the time. He was a gentleman both by education and manners. The offence for which he was convicted, and eventually executed, was that of having committed a forgery on the Gravesend bank, to the extent of 74*l*. He had been induced to do this solely from an anxiety to learn the Hebrew language, for which he had a great aptitude. As soon as he got the money he re-

paired to a monastery in the South of France, and entered himself as a student there, under one of the professors celebrated for his knowledge of the Hebrew language. His retreat being discovered, he was brought back to England, tried, and convicted. He had spent but little of the money when he was apprehended; but notwithstanding this fact, in conjunction with his most amiable disposition and exemplary morals, such was the sanguinary character of our criminal jurisprudence at that period, that he was doomed to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. I may mention as an extraordinary proof of the singularly excellent character of this young man, whose name I forbear to mention, lest some of his relatives may still survive, that hearing his friends were making great exertions to procure a commutation of his sentence, he strenuously resisted it on the ground that as another young man had been executed a few days previously for precisely the same offence, there would be an injustice in allowing him to escape. His fate excited the deepest regret in

the minds of all who were acquainted with the circumstances; and the inhabitants of Gravesend, where he had lived for many years, erected a handsome monument to his memory.

Formerly the practice in Newgate, on the night previous to the execution of prisoners, was to shut them up in cells on the ground floor. From these they proceeded along a dark narrow passage to the place of execution. Anything more gloomy than those cells it were impossible to imagine. They have all the appearance of subterraneous holes. They are now used as places of lumber. The Rev. Dr. Dodd was shut up in one of these cells the night before his execution. I could not look into his cell without the most painful feelings.

One very interesting part of Newgate is the chapel in which divine service is performed in the presence of the prisoners. When what is termed a "condemned sermon" is to be preached in it—that is to say, a sermon previous to an execution—the chapel becomes a place of peculiar interest both to the prisoners, and to many

persons from without.* On such occasions there is always a crowd of persons at the felons' door, waiting to obtain admission when the service is about to commence. Though the chapel is only capable of accommodating 400 persons with comfort, 700 or 800 will sometimes be wedged into it when a condemned sermon is to be preached. People are attracted by two things on such occasions. The one is a desire to hear a sermon under such circumstances, and the other is a curiosity to see the poor unhappy creature about to be hurried into the presence of his Creator. There is a gallery in the chapel which is appropriated to strangers on such occasions. Another gallery is set apart for the female prisoners, who are shut out from the view of the male prisoners by a curtain. In the body of the chapel are the male prisoners. The "condemned pew," or the pew which is appropriated to the unfortunate man whose days are

* Formerly admission was to be obtained to the chapel to hear a condemned sermon preached, on paying half-a-crown; but no admission money is now received.

numbered, is in the centre. It is black all over, which only serves to heighten, by contrast, the unearthly paleness of the miserable occupant. The pulpit and reading-desk are hung with black, and the whole appearance of the place, conjoined with the associations which arise in one's mind, produces the deepest solemnity of feeling. No man could remain any time in it without feeling his mind overwhelmed with an undefinable melancholy, even on those occasions when no "condemned sermon" is to be preached. What then must be one's emotions when he sees before him a fellow-creature within a few hours of being ushered into the presence of the Divine Being, and hears a sermon which has an almost exclusive reference to the culprit's situation?

I am not sure whether, after all, these "condemned sermons" are judicious. The miserable parties to whose circumstances they are intended to apply, are not in a condition, in one case out of a hundred perhaps, to profit by them. Any one who reflects for a moment on

the situation of such persons, must at once come to this conclusion. But the matter is not one of mere inference. Every person who has been present while these sermons were being delivered, must have seen in the appearance of the parties, that they were insensible to what was going on. With very few exceptions, indeed, they cannot walk into the pew set apart for them without support, and when they are in it, it is with difficulty they can retain a sitting position. Their tottering frames, their wild and vacant look, and indeed their aspect altogether, force the conviction on every spectator's mind, that they are incapable of attending to the sermon. The sound of the preacher's voice rings in the ear of the wretched beings for whom the discourse is specially intended, but his words have no meaning in them. But even supposing there was nothing, in the fact of their trembling on the very verge of eternity, to unfit them for paying the requisite attention to the solemn admonitions of the preacher, the circumstance of their being constantly stared at

by the strangers, and the other prisoners, would of itself be sufficient to discompose them. Would it not be much better to allow them to remain in their cells while service is being performed in the presence of the other prisoners, and then, on its close, to let the Ordinary speak to them in private? Their minds, in such circumstances, would be much more susceptible of devout impressions.

I have often thought, when reflecting on the subject of "condemned sermons," that at the very time such sermons are being preached before one or more unhappy creatures doomed to death, there are, it may be, hundreds of others throughout the Christian world who are also hearing *their* last sermon, though unconscious of it. The thought is one which is well fitted to awaken in the mind a train of serious reflections; but it would be out of place in a work of this nature to indulge in it.

In the chapel in Newgate, divine service is performed in precisely the same way as in any of the established churches in the metropolis.

There is a clerk, a communion altar, an organ, &c., for the due performance of the ritual of the church. The Rev. Ordinary being himself a rigid churchman, is strictly observant of all the formularies which the church enjoins on those in her communion. In reading the liturgy, his fine sonorous voice—now, owing to advanced years, it is not so effective—was formerly the admiration of all who heard it. Its varied and powerful intonations, conjoined with the solemnity of the speaker's aspect, and the affecting associations connected with the place, were strikingly calculated to produce a deep impression on the minds of all present. Even now, there are few clergymen in the church who can read the service with greater effect.

The condition of Newgate as regards its moral relations, is still far from being what it ought to be; but a very marked improvement has taken place in this respect within the last twenty years. Before that time it was a perfect hotbed of all descriptions of crime. It were impossible to form an idea of the amount of in-

jury which it has, from first to last, done to its inmates. Boys and girls of tender ages were formerly committed to Newgate for offences of the most trifling nature. They were, with very few exceptions, committed for the first offence, the police magistrates making no distinction between the mere tyro in crime, and the most confirmed criminal. The youthful creature who, it may have been, stole a pennyworth of bread to administer to the cravings of hunger, and who knew not even in thought what crime, in strict propriety of speech meant, was doomed to mingle in Newgate with the most depraved and hardened offenders in the metropolis. Evil communications have, under any circumstances, a tendency to corrupt good manners. In Newgate the destruction of all moral feeling on the part of those who entered it with any, was an almost inevitable result. What else could be expected where a simple unsuspecting youth was doomed to associate with some of the worst characters in London? Escape from the contagion of such evil example

as was there hourly set them, from the moment they crossed the threshold of the place, could be little short of miraculous. The worst language was constantly heard, and the person who refused to take part in the shocking conversations of the vilest of the inmates, was persecuted beyond endurance. The leaders in crime were constantly talking of their great exploits that way; and as they were a sort of heroes in the eyes of the majority, those who entered Newgate comparatively innocent, came out fired by an ambition, as they considered it, of imitating the achievements of the worst of the inmates. There, too, the mere novice was, in a few days, instructed in the ways of crime much more perfectly, than he would have been by years of study and practice out of doors. The cases were consequently innumerable in which youths who went into Newgate without anything like a propensity to the commission of crime,—with, indeed, an entire horror of it, altogether irrespective of its penal consequences,—came out with their minds so depraved as to fit them

for undertaking the most daring enterprises, and committing the most fearful atrocities. Thus Newgate actually promoted objects the very reverse of those it professed to have in view. Instead of repressing crime, it proved a most fertile nursery of it in its worst forms. Mrs. Fry, of whose labours in Newgate I shall have to speak presently, in her evidence before a committee of the House of Commons in 1818, has one short passage which of itself speaks volumes as to the state of morals in Newgate previous to the time I have mentioned. "Women," she says, "who came in weeping over their deviations—some small deviations perhaps—by the time of their trial or dismissal would sometimes become so barefaced and wicked as to laugh at the very same things, and to be fitted for almost any crime. I understand that before we went into the prison it was considered a reproach to be a modest woman."

The same excellent lady says in another part of her evidence, which was limited to the female side of the prison, that there she witnessed the

most dreadful proceedings. There were begging, swearing, gaming, fighting, singing, and dancing, and scenes too revolting to be described. Matters, it is unnecessary to say, were still worse on the male side of the prison. It was when such was the moral condition of Newgate, that Mrs. Fry, who is an honour alike to her species and her country, first began her philanthropic labours in it. The reformation which she has effected is incalculably great. The amount of good she has, from first to last, accomplished by her benevolent exertions within the walls of Newgate, will never be known in this world. Her's was a quiet, unobtrusive philanthropy. In her labours of mercy she shrunk from the public gaze. How many hours of her life she has spent amidst the physically and morally repulsive scenes of the interior of Newgate, is not known to the public. But I may mention, having had it from the lips of one of her most intimate friends, that for many years a large portion of her time was spent within the walls of that prison. Her's, indeed, was philanthropy

worthy of the name. It was a philanthropy based, as all true philanthropy must be, on the religion of Him who ever went about doing good. And her labours of love were as judicious as they were laudable. She first established a school for the instruction of the children of the convicts, and then she undertook the care of the female convicts themselves. What an amount of moral courage, self-denial, and patient endurance, must have been necessary for the accomplishment of such objects as this excellent woman contemplated!

But though, by the indefatigable and zealous labours of Mrs. Fry, assisted by other benevolent ladies whom she organised into a committee, an incalculable amount of good has been done in Newgate, there is still room for great improvement. It will never be made what it is intended to be—a place for the correction of offenders and the repression of crime, so long as the system of allowing the prisoners to associate together is continued. They will necessarily corrupt one another, and employ their time in

forming new schemes for the commission of crime, as soon as they have regained their liberty. That they deem imprisonment in Newgate no great punishment, if, indeed, it be any punishment at all, is proved by the fact of so many of them being returned within a few months of their liberation. There are many instances on record of criminals spending full one-half of their time in Newgate, until, as they themselves say, a new leaf is turned over by their being transported beyond seas. Not many years ago, a youth under twenty, was found in Newgate for the thirteenth time. The separation of the prisoners from one another; in other words, solitary confinement, is the only thing which will ever invest Newgate, or any other gaol, with sufficient terror to a criminal's mind, to deter him from the commission of crime. The solitary system has been tried in other places, and found most effectual. I am glad to understand that it is in contemplation to resort to it in London. I am satisfied it will be followed here, as in

other places, by a very great and permanent diminution of crime.

In Newgate, there is a stated clergyman called the Ordinary,* for administering to the spiritual wants of the prisoners. Divine service is performed every sabbath-day in the chapel belonging to the place: the prisoners are all obliged to be present. The Ordinary whose heart is in the work of endeavouring to convert sinners, will always find scope enough in the interior of Newgate for his most indefatigable exertions. The inmates are of necessity precisely that class of persons who, of all others, stand most in need of spiritual instruction and spiritual admonition. But the most solemn and affecting part of the Ordinary's duty is, to administer to the exigencies of those on whom the sentence of death is about to be executed. This is not only a duty of an awfully solemn nature, but it is one which, for its due perform-

* The Rev. Mr. Cotton is now, and has been for many years, the Ordinary of Newgate.

ance, pre-eminently requires a sound judgment as well as warm Christian affection. It is one, in the performance of which the Ordinary is usually assisted by one or more ministers of various denominations, or by some private individuals whose breasts burn with Christian compassion for the souls of the unhappy persons who are about to be ushered into the presence of their Maker. There lives not the man who can more cordially venerate than I do, those philanthropic individuals who spend so much of their time in endeavouring to enlighten the minds of those in Newgate who are standing on the verge of eternity, in matters of a spiritual kind. But I am afraid that their good offices are sometimes deficient in Christian prudence. I confess it has always appeared to me a matter which ought to be one of deep concern to Christians, that almost all the culprits who are executed, mount the scaffold with the most entire persuasion, that all is safe as regards their future destinies. In most cases they have had only a few conversations with their spiritual advisers, before

they seem to be as much satisfied that their absence from the earth will be their presence in heaven, as that they are about to close their connexion with all things below for ever. This is a matter of such general occurrence, that it has become a daily remark, that if a man wishes to make sure of the way to heaven he has only to go by the gallows. I am aware that the abuse of a thing is no argument against the thing itself; and that though some men were on this account to think lightly of the commission of crimes against society, that would be no reason for not communicating spiritual instruction, and administering, within proper limits, spiritual consolation, to persons condemned to death. But I much fear that when the cases are so numerous in which men who have been guilty of the grossest crimes, both against the Deity and their fellow-men, thus ascend the scaffold with so entire a confidence in a happy hereafter, there must be something injudicious in the way in which the duties of a spiritual monitor are discharged. I am not

without my apprehensions that men make their exit out of the world, at the Old Bailey, with the most entire persuasion that all is well, whose minds have not been sufficiently enlightened on the great matters which pertain to their souls and eternity, and whose hearts have not undergone that change which the scriptures declare to be essential to salvation. To me it would be much more satisfactory if, in the majority of cases, I saw the unfortunate individuals who are doomed to die on the scaffold, look forward to their appearance before the great white throne, with fear and trembling. For sinners of the greatest magnitude, as such individuals usually are, this, in my view of the matter, would be, in most cases, a more becoming frame of mind, than the entire confidence and perfect composure which are so common. Death-bed repentances are proverbially doubtful; and I much fear that there are many of those who mount the scaffold without the dread of a hereafter, who would, were their sentences to be reversed and themselves

again turned loose on society,—be found to be essentially the same persons they were before. I am much afraid, in other words, that their confidence is in many cases a false confidence, generated by the grievously mistaken, but best-intentioned representations of those who have conversed with them on spiritual matters. I fear that the mercy of the Almighty is sometimes dwelt upon to the almost entire exclusion of sin's sinfulness, the magnitude of the party's guilt, and of the necessity of heartfelt contrition and brokenness of spirit to everlasting happiness. That is not true Christian charity which would, in such a case, gloss over the culprit's sins against his Maker, or only dwell on them in general terms. Enlightened Christian benevolence would, while pressing on the criminal's attention the glorious truth that there is salvation for the very chief of sinners, seek to impress his mind with a deep sense of the enormity of his own guilt. I know of no spectacle in the world of a more awfully affecting character, than that of a person about

to be ushered into the presence of his Maker, with the most entire persuasion that all is well, while he has never had a single overwhelming conviction of sin. That of the man who leaves the world without any thought at all about his future destiny, is, undoubtedly, affecting enough; but it is not to be compared with the case which I have just supposed. I fear that those who are on the eve of being executed at the Old Bailey, have, in many cases, the language of "Peace, peace" whispered in their ears, before their minds have been sufficiently impressed with a sense of their spiritual danger. This is a mistaken leniency. Surely if there be a case in which faithfulness is required, it is in that of a criminal of no ordinary magnitude, about to be ushered into the eternal world. Let those whose Christian philanthropy prompts them to converse with persons sentenced to death, point out to them the all-sufficiency of the finished work of Emmanuel for sinners of the deepest dye; but let them guard against anything which would have tendency to inspire a false confidence in the mercy of the Almighty.

If I understand the theology of revelation aright, it may be laid down as a general principle, that where there are not convictions of sin, and brokenness of spirit on account of it, there can be no salvation. I know that there may be different degrees as regards the force of these convictions and the depth of the contrition; but those, to say the least of it, are doubtful cases, especially at the Old Bailey, where these feelings are not sufficiently marked to strike the mind of one who converses with the doomed culprit on spiritual matters. I am sure it can hardly be necessary to say, that in these observations I have no particular persons nor particular cases in my eye. They have been dictated solely by the painful apprehension which has arisen in my own mind, from what I read and hear of persons expiring on the scaffold, whether at the Old Bailey or elsewhere, that the calmness with which such persons die is in many cases the consequence of a false confidence arising from ignorance of the magnitude of their own guilt, and the awful enormity of sin.

Perhaps there are few more affecting things in the world than to spend with a man sentenced to death, the last night of his existence. I have heard from the lips of one who has spent many such nights with unhappy men in Newgate, statements as to their feelings and conduct of the most deeply touching kind. Occasionally culprits are to be found who remain hardened to the last. They have lived in the disbelief of a future state of rewards and punishments; and they cling to their wretched infidelity to the last. There are others, who as they have lived in utter recklessness of everything religious, never having bestowed a thought as to whether Christianity be true or not, so in that state of awful recklessness they die. But instances of either kind are exceedingly rare. The atheist or deist has his mental perceptions on religious subjects greatly improved, when the immediate prospect of another world is before him. The evidences in favour of Christianity which he formerly laughed to scorn, as no evidences at all, now commend themselves to his mind with all the force of an

irresistible conviction; and he dares no more doubt the truth of that religion, than he dare doubt the fact that his days are numbered, and that he is standing on the very brink of eternity. The man who had been as thoughtless before about a future state and his own probable destiny, as the brutes that perish, is now the subject of an overwhelming anxiety. Let any one stretch his imagination to the utmost, and try to picture to himself what must be the state of mind of such persons the night previous to their execution. However vivid may be one's imagination, it will fall infinitely short of the fearful reality. Perhaps the history of mankind affords no example of the human mind being in a condition so solemn and appalling. The wretched party knows that he has but a few hours to live. Conscience summons up from the depths of the past, all the transgressions of the greatest magnitude he has committed, whether against his Maker or his fellow-men. To the latter he can now make no atonement; and even though he may cherish the hope that his guilt is expiated

in the sight of Him into whose presence he is about to be ushered, yet this hope will not prevent his feeling, in all their acuteness, the agonies of remorse. The mind is, as it were, torn by the conflicting claims of the two worlds; by the claims of that he is about to leave, and those of the world into which he is on the eve of being hurried. He has relatives and friends: it may be he has parents alive, or that he has a wife and children. How must the thought of parting for ever from them, coupled with that of the circumstances under which he is about to close his life, agitate his bosom! Never to see them more in time, were of itself under any circumstances an awfully affecting consideration; but to reflect that he bequeaths to them the disgrace of dying by the hands of the public executioner, and that they can never recur to his memory without the most painful feelings,—are thoughts that give a terrible additional poignancy to his mental distress. Then there is the thought of suffering an ignominious death next day in the presence of thousands. That is a thought which

constantly haunts his mind and harasses it beyond all conception. Contemporaneous with such reflections are his thoughts about the world he is about to enter. Where the unhappy man has no hope, what must be his state of mind in the immediate prospect of eternity! I will not dwell on such a topic: it is indescribably terrible. Even where he has hope, there will be an overwhelming awe on his mind, at the thought of being in a few hours before the tribunal of his Judge. With a mind so exercised, is it to be wondered at that the last night of one's existence in Newgate should be spent in a state of frenzy? His brain reels; his lips are compressed; his tongue is parched with a burning thirst; in his eye there is a vacant, unearthly expression; his complexion has a spectral appearance; he is incapable of remaining for any time in one position, or in one place; his hair stands on end; a cold perspiration bathes his face; the clamminess of death is already on his skin; his whole appearance and demeanour show that his bosom is the seat of the most tumultuous emotions,

The gloomy aspect of his cell is in striking accordance with the sadness of his soul. The little glimmering light allowed him, only serves to let him see the horrors of his situation. He feels himself already as effectually shut out from the world as if he were no longer in it. The silence which reigns around him is awful. He might almost hear the falling of a pin. His own hurried breathing alarms him. He starts at the scund of every movement he makes. His very shadow frightens him. The bell of St. Paul's strikes the hour; his breast palpitates at the sound, as if it were a summons to him to appear that instant in the presence of his Maker. The deep and solemn tones of the bell, made more solemn by the awfulness of his situation, remind him with a terrible reality that he has but a few hours to live. When he can so far compose himself, he turns to his bible; that book which perhaps he has not opened for a long series of years. The recollection of his youthful days when, at school or at home, he had used at stated intervals to read certain portions of the inspired vo-

lume, rushes on his mind, and he bitterly reproaches himself for having disregarded its heavenly precepts. He muses on these touching topics for a little, and then kneels down on his cold floor to implore the Divine mercy. The picture is altogether frightful to contemplate: it is no imaginary one: it rather falls immeasurably short of the reality.

It is true that as there are exceptions to every rule, so there are to this. As before stated, some men remain hardened to the last; doing violence equally to the laws of friendship and the claims of religion. The very brutes themselves, could they be made sensible of their approaching death, would betray more feeling than do some of those unhappy men who are doomed by the laws of their country to suffer by the hands of the public executioner. It may be in the recollection of some that when Thistlewood and the other Cato Street conspirators were executed in 1819, for high treason, some of them into only conducted themselves with a brute insensibility to their situation, the night before their deaths, but that

when on the scaffold, and within a few moments of being in the presence of their Maker, they made wry faces at the spectators with a view of making them laugh, and played the buffoon until the cord encircled their necks.

And I have heard of others who, with nothing of the spirit of bravado in them, as in this case, have felt and acted up to the last moment of their existence, as if on the morning of their execution they were only going to attend their usual avocations. This was not, with the persons to whom I refer, the effect of any miscalled philosophical notion: it arose from an easiness of mind which not even the immediate prospect of death itself could affect. One who was an eye-witness of the fact has informed me, that on a young man being brought out for execution, a good many years ago, at Newgate, he discovered on his way to the scaffold, that one of the laces of his half-boots was loose, and having got the permission of the officers, he bestowed nearly a minute in adjusting it. In the course of doing so, he found that he had missed one of the

holes of the boot through which he should have put the cord, on which he immediately undid the whole and put the string quite right. The young man had always been remarkable for his attention to "tidiness," as he called it. The least disarrangement of any part of his dress, though that dress, from his circumstances in life, was always homely enough, made him quite unhappy; it seemed to be the only thing which ever disturbed the equanimity of his mind. What a singular illustration this circumstance affords, of the ruling passion being strong in death!

The execution of a human being at any place, and under any circumstances, is an occurrence of an awfully interesting kind. One at the Old Bailey possesses, from a variety of adventitious circumstances which I need not mention, a peculiarly fearful interest. The first preliminary step towards it is that of reading, in the hearing of the convicts, the sermon which the Rev. Dr. Dodd preached to his fellow-prisoners immediately before he himself was offered up a sa-

crifice to the Moloch of a sanguinary criminal jurisprudence. This and other devotional services suited to the awful occasion, being over, the condemned party is shut up in the cell for the night. If he can so far compose his mind, under the melancholy circumstances in which he is placed, as to close his eyes in sleep, he is sure to be awakened at between four and five o'clock in the morning, by the sound of the horses' feet and the wheels of the vehicle, which drag forth from the court-yard the apparatus for his execution. And what an awakening must that be! Poets talk of the sound of the death-knell; what are their images to this? To awake, it may be from a pleasant dream of a long and happy life—and there are abundant instances of the kind—and to find, that his first conscious impression is, that the sounds which have disturbed his slumbers, are sounds which denote the immediate proximity of an ignominious death,—is surely one of the most terrible situations in which a human being can be placed! The very transition, in the supposed case, from

visions of a joyful nature to a sense of the party's impending doom, can only serve to heighten the awfulness of that doom. The "heavy noise" caused by the clattering of the horses' hoofs, and the rattling of the wheels of the ponderous vehicle, employed to carry out to the front of the building the materials out of which the gallows is to be erected,—is regarded by the turnkeys and other officers of the place, as the signal for their rising from their beds and performing the functions which severally belong to them, in the affecting spectacle about to be exhibited. Before six, all is bustle and activity in and about the prison. About that hour, Mr. Baker, a pious dissenter, repairs to the cell of the prisoner about to suffer, and admonishes him of a fact with which he is already but too well acquainted, namely, that he has but an hour or two to live. Mr. Baker then endeavours to take advantage of the awful circumstances in which the unhappy man is placed, to impress his mind with the great truths of religion, and to urge him to improve the few mo-

ments that remain to him of life, in making up his peace, through faith in the atoning blood of a Saviour, with the Being before whose tribunal he is about to appear. Mr. Baker not only admonishes, but prays with and for the unhappy man. Prayer is, or at least it ought to be, at any time, a solemn exercise; but what must be the solemnity which pervades a true Christian's mind, when he is interceding at a throne of grace for an immortal spirit which he knows will have a sentence of everlasting happiness or endless misery passed upon it before two hours have elapsed! The Rev. Dr. Cotton, the Ordinary of the prison, arrives before seven, to administer the sacrament of the supper to the unhappy man, should he be disposed to receive it. Then come the Sheriffs and Under-sheriffs, accompanied by some of their friends who may be desirous of witnessing an execution. A few minutes before the time appointed for bringing the unhappy party on the scaffold, all those who have been admitted into the interior of Newgate are conducted to a part of the prison called the

press-room, where Mr. Cope desires them to remain and make as little noise as possible until the prisoner comes in, which is usually four or five minutes afterwards. That is a time of deep and awful interest, even to those who are only to be witnesses of the dreadful drama about to be enacted. Often have the hearts of persons of the greatest nerve been known to quail, and their limbs to quiver, while spending these few minutes in such circumstances. There is something in the deep gloom of the room, together with the massy ponderous appearance of the walls of the prison, which are seen out of the window, which accords with the sadness of soul caused by the contemplation of the scene which is on the eve of being exhibited. The prisoner is brought into the press-room, and on being led up to a table in the centre, undergoes the process of pinioning. This is not done, as is generally supposed, by the executioner. It is the duty always of the Sheriffs' officers, who are in this case the assistants to the executioner, to pinion the hands of the culprit. Perhaps it were

impossible to conceive a more solemn or affecting spectacle than that of the procession into the press-room, previous to the prisoner's undergoing the preparations for his execution. The Sheriffs and Under-sheriffs carrying their staves first enter the apartment. The Rev. Ordinary, whose appearance is remarkably venerable, follows; and last of all comes the unhappy being himself. The preliminary arrangements in the press-room for the execution seldom occupy more than two or three minutes. The whole of those present then form themselves into regular order, and move in due procession through the dark passages of the prison towards the gallows.

There is something solemn and impressive in the appearance of a funeral procession: how much deeper must be the impressiveness, and greater the solemnity, of such a procession as this! There is one who acts a part in it who in a few minutes will cease to exist. His connexion with the world is on the eve of closing for ever, and that, too, under circumstances of the most awful kind. The Rev. Ordinary reminds

the unhappy man of the fact, by reading aloud the burial service of the church. Contemporaneously with the first step the procession takes, the Rev. Gentleman pronounces in distinct and sonorous tones—"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," &c. Perhaps there are not more expressive passages in the Scriptures, than those which the church has selected as part of her burial service. They have a solemnising effect when delivered with feeling and propriety over the grave of a departed fellow-being.* How much more solemn must that service be when said over a living being just on the threshold of eternity! The Rev. Ordinary continues pronouncing the service of the church until the Sheriffs, the Under-sheriffs, himself, and

* Let me not be understood from this as approving of the funeral service of the church. I regard it as a thing which is altogether unwarranted in Scripture to represent Jesus as the resurrection and the life of all who die, indiscriminately.

the prisoner, reach the scaffold, when the voice of the Rev. Gentleman is drowned amidst the noise caused by the assembled thousands of spectators. The prisoner then ascends the steps which lead to the eminence called the drop, whence he is to be plunged into the ocean of eternity. The executioner, who before this time has nothing to do with the wretched individual, now takes charge of him, and proceeds to complete the remaining arrangements necessary to his final exit. The executioner places him in the exact spot where the fatal work may be completed. The rope is adjusted, the cap is drawn over his head down to his chin, and the signal is put into his hand. Mr. Cotton then resumes the reading of the burial service:—"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth, as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour but of thee, O Lord! who for our sins art justly displeased.

Yet, O Lord God most holy! O Lord most mighty! O holy and most merciful Saviour! deliver us not into the pains of eternal death!" The signal is then given, and in a few moments the prisoner is in eternity.

If one could suppose a man—and there have been instances of the kind, though extremely rare—if one could suppose a man to retain his entire self-possession while standing on the drop immediately before its falling, the thoughts which would under such circumstances crowd on his mind, would necessarily be of a most solemn nature. To think that he is this moment in perfect health—it may be in the prime of life—and that the next his body will be a piece of inanimate clay, and his spirit in the presence of the Supreme Being; to think that this moment he is surrounded by his fellow-beings on earth, and the next will be amidst the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of departed saints, or else consigned to the abodes of everlasting despair,—these are thoughts which are surely adapted, if anything could be, to

inspire the mind with feelings of the deepest awe. Whatever may be the destiny of the man who thus expires on the scaffold, how great and sudden must be the transition he undergoes!

The spectacle of the execution of a human being ought to be one of a deeply affecting nature to all who behold it. It is so to every spectator of a well regulated mind. To the vast majority, however, of those thousands who witness such scenes, it has nothing affecting in it. They look upon it precisely in the same light as if it were a drama got up for their special amusement. And rather than be deprived of the sight they will pay for a view of it,—just as they would for admission to a theatre. So early as five o'clock on an execution morning, you will see crowds of persons trooping from all parts of the metropolis towards the Old Bailey. The leading thoroughfares present continued streams of them. They are, with very few exceptions, the most depraved and the most criminal of the population. Their uproarious conduct, their shouts of laughter, their vile expressions, their

imprecations on themselves and on each other. all show that in the scale of morals they are but a few removes from the brute creation.

The scenes which used to be exhibited on the scaffold, were sometimes of a most deeply touching nature, regarded merely in reference to this world. One who was on the scaffold on the occasion of an execution for a very trifling felony, lately mentioned to me that the unhappy man, on reaching the eminence from whence he was to drop into eternity, said he had just one remaining wish ungratified, and that was to get one last look of his wife before he died. He added he was sure that no earthly power would have prevented her from being among the crowd. As he uttered the words he looked eagerly around on the assemblage. . His eye, strange as it may seem, did actually recognise his wife; he kissed his hand to her, gave her a most benignant smile, and looked up to Heaven as if invoking the Divine blessing on her behalf. He sobbed out to the Rev. Gentleman who was present to administer the last offices of religion to

him, that he could now die contented; in less than a minute his spirit was before the throne of the Eternal.

Another instance of a very affecting nature, arising also from the devoted attachment of the prisoner to his wife, occurred some ten or twelve years since, in the case of a member of the Society of Friends; the only one of their members, I may mention as an act of justice to that excellent body of men, who had suffered on the scaffold for a century before. The unfortunate individual in question was executed for forgery. Immediately before the cap was put on his head, which, as before stated, is among the last of the preparations for the awful impending catastrophe, he desired the Rev. Ordinary to take from his pocket,—not being able to do it himself in consequence of his hands being pinioned, —a farewell letter he had received the previous evening from his wife. The Rev. Gentleman having given him the letter, the unhappy man raised it with his pinioned hands to his mouth, loaded it with the most affectionate kisses, and

then depositing it in his bosom, gave the fatal signal, and in a few moments was in another world.

Talk of the romance of fiction! Will any one point out to me in the wide range of fiction anything more deeply touching than the simple unvarnished incidents I have mentioned in the two cases just given? Alas! that ever the laws or judges of England, should have doomed such men to suffer an ignominious death for offences of so trivial a nature!

Novelists would occasionally find excellent materials for their works, in Newgate. I shall only mention one strikingly romantic case which fell under the personal observation of Mr. C——, an acquaintance of my own. About twelve years since, two men were executed for uttering a 5*l.* note, knowing it to be forged. My acquaintance happened to be present at the execution. In the course of an hour or so after it was over, he chanced to meet with a person he knew, with whom he entered into conversation on the subject of the drama which had been enacted at

Newgate. Mr. C—— had been expressing his regret at the unfortunate circumstance of two men being doomed to lose their lives for the simple utterance of a forged 5*l.* note: the other treated the thing with levity, and indulged in a variety of coarse unfeeling jokes on the subject. "Did they swing in excellent style? Did their heels dangle nicely in the air?" he inquired. Mr. C—, in the first instance, reproved him for his ill-timed jokes on so melancholy a subject. This only made him worse. At length, worked up to a temporary excitement, my acquaintance left the other quite hastily, telling him, as he quitted the house in which they had met, that he had better take care lest he himself should share the same fate as the two unfortunate men, before he quitted the world. Mr. C—— soon after went to the country, and did not return to town for four months. On his arrival, he heard that an execution was to take place the following morning, but without being aware who the party was. He resolved on being present. He was so. About an hour before

the execution, he went into the cell of the prisoner, accompanied by several other persons. At first he did not recognise the prisoner; but he had not been in the apartment many seconds, when the prisoner advanced to him, and addressing him by his name, begged to be allowed to speak privately to him. The governor of the place acceded to the prisoner's request; but begged him to be as quick as possible, as he had now so short a period to live. "Mr. C—," said he, "do you recollect when you and I met in the Red Lion, a few months ago?" Mr. C— answered in the affirmative. "And the nature of our conversation?" Mr. C—— said he did. "Well then, that evening I purchased of a Jew, and uttered the flash five-pound note for the utterance of which I am now about to lose my life. I have been most earnestly desiring to see you to express my deep regret for the improper language I made use of regarding the two men who were then executed. I am now about to suffer for the very same offence."

Of late, as I shall afterwards have occasion

to state more particularly, there has not been any great sacrifice of life at the Old Bailey. It was far different formerly. From the middle of the last century downwards to a few years since, the annals of our London criminal jurisprudence present us with one continued stream of human blood. The executions have often in the course of that period been between fifty and sixty per annum. The Bank of England alone could boast—for there are parties connected with that establishment who used to talk of the thing as if it had been a matter for boasting—the Bank could boast, year after year, of sacrificing its thirty or forty victims to the forgery of its notes. I know of nothing more painful in British history,—or which ought to make us more ashamed of our country—for the sixty or seventy years preceding the recent amelioration of the criminal code,—than the fact of so many of our fellow-men being offered up to the Juggernaut of a sanguinary statute book. Laws are generally supposed to be made for the protection of human life: for a course of years it seemed as

if our laws had been made for its extinction. The destruction of life in this country, and in the metropolis especially, was truly frightful. The most trifling offences were punished with death. Even in cases where, morally, there was no guilt at all, and where, even legally, every circumstance attendant on the commission of the offence was in favour of the prisoner,—even in these cases nothing would satisfy the Draconian spirit of our criminal jurisprudence, but the life of the party. Who can look back on the execution of Dr. Dodd, coupled with a knowledge of the circumstances under which that unfortunate man suffered, without feelings of the deepest pain, and of shame for a country that could have tolerated such things? Dr. Dodd merely forged the name of a nobleman with whom he was on terms of the closest intimacy, for a small sum to meet some pressing demand; and even this was done, not with the view of defrauding any one, but under the most assured conviction, that by the time the bill had become due, he would be able to meet it, and

consequently no one ever know anything about it. Yet for this offence our sanguinary laws were inexorable in demanding the life of the unfortunate divine. Some time after came the execution of a poor woman, whose melancholy story is so touchingly related in a speech for the modification of our then criminal jurisprudence, by the late Sir William Meredith. She had gone into a draper's shop and had taken up, if I remember rightly, a small piece of flannel, worth eighteen pence, which she intended to pawn for as much as would purchase a fourpenny loaf of bread to save herself and her infant at the breast, from starvation. What made the case of this poor woman the more affecting was, that she was young and beautiful, was an entire stranger to crime, and had been in comfortable circumstances, but had been reduced to utter destitution from the circumstances of her husband having been seized by a press-gang, and put on board a-man-of-war. Without entering into details, I may mention that the judges of that period seemed to have such a penchant, as the French

say, for human blood, that various cases of executions for stealing two or three penny tarts from a confectioner's shop, are on record. Not even youth was any protection against the Draconian spirit of the laws and those entrusted with the administration of them. For the most trivial acts of felony, mere boys were then doomed to suffer on the scaffold. What must have been the constitution of the minds of those judges who could sanction executions for such offences, it is difficult to conceive. The very thought, one would suppose, that such things should be, must have made every one shudder in whose breast there was left one trace of humanity. And yet the judges of a former time could, so far as we are aware, be parties to such transactions day after day, and year after year, without one single compunctious visiting.

But a better day has dawned on us. The rigour of our criminal code has been greatly relaxed.

It is a most gratifying circumstance that there have been so few executions in London of late

years, compared with the number at previous periods. With the single exception of one unfortunate man who suffered in March last, there has been no execution in London for four years past. This happy diminution in the number of executions is principally owing to the recent alteration in the criminal code, which abolishes capital punishments in the case of so many offences to which they were formerly annexed. The result of the experiment made by the legislature as to the efficiency of secondary punishments to repress crime—for I believe the legislature only viewed the matter as an experiment—has been a complete confirmation of the views of those philanthropic individuals who, for some years previously, had laboured with a zeal and assiduity which exceed all praise, to soften the rigours of our criminal code. I have here especially in my eye, the "Society for the Diffusion of Information on Capital Punishments." Circumstances have made me better acquainted with the labours of this Society than the public generally can be, and I should not be doing jus-

tice to my own feelings, did I not take this opportunity of expressing my conviction, that the annals of benevolence afford but few parallels to the purity of motive in which that Society had its origin, and to the untiring perseverance with which, for a series of years, it laboured to promote its humane objects. It has always sought to shun rather than to court the public gaze. If ever a Society did good by stealth, it is the Society in question. It has pursued the quiet and even tenor of its way, amidst circumstances of a most discouraging nature—so discouraging, indeed, that nothing but the consciousness of being engaged in a most righteous cause, could have supported it under them. The great truth which this Society has laboured so earnestly to impress on the legislature and the country, is, that putting out of view the injustice and inhumanity of sanguinary punishments, a lenient criminal code is much better adapted to repress or diminish crime. The result has most conclusively proved the truth of the position. There has been a very great diminution in the number of those

offences which, previous to the last few years, were punished with death, since the alteration referred to came into operation. I intended to have gone into details on this subject; but that would occupy too much space. It is, besides, unnecessary, as the parliamentary returns in which the fact is established, are already before the country. I may be told that this diminution in the number of offences, formerly capital, but now no longer so, is to be ascribed to a decrease of crime consequent on the improved circumstances of the country, and that it is not the result of the greater efficiency of secondary punishments. There is one very short but very conclusive answer to this: there has been in the very same period an increase in all the minor offences, in other words, to those to which the extreme penalty of the law was not before annexed. But, therefore, for the superior efficacy of milder punishments, why should there not have been a corresponding increase in the offences which were formerly capital?

But the position that a lenient system of

criminal jurisprudence is more efficacious than a sanguinary one, is as much in accordance with philosophy as it is with experience. The injured party, under our previous Draconian code, rather, in many cases, passively submitted to the injury than prosecute the offender, when they knew that his death would be the result of a conviction. And juries, on the same just and humane principle, hesitated to convict, even where the evidence was quite conclusive. The consequence was, that the offender often escaped altogether. Hence criminals, under the former system, speculated on the chances of escaping punishment, even should they be detected in the commission of the offence. This, of course, was holding out a strong temptation to crime. Now, however, that the punishment is more proportioned to the crime, the injured party have no scruples in prosecuting, and juries unhesitatingly convict where the evidence is clear. Criminals, therefore, now know that they have no chance of escape in so far as the prosecutor or the jury are concerned; they know that their punish-

ment is certain; and the *certainty*, not the *severity* of punishment, has always been found to be the great preventive of crime. The history of all other countries, as well as our own, in which the effect of sanguinary and lenient punishments has been severally tried, concurs in proving that the latter is most calculated to repress crime.

The great argument urged by the advocates of capital punishments in favour of the enforcement of the extreme penalty, has always been the necessity of an example. The facts already stated, have abundantly proved that executions have never operated in the way of salutary example; and a moment's reflection might have served to convince any one that they never could. The foot of the gallows is not the place to learn one's duty, either to the Deity or to society. The spectacle of an execution necessarily tends to harden or brutalise the mind. All experience shows, that the more a man becomes familiarised with death, under any form, the less he thinks of it. In the case of executions for secondary offences, the mind of

the spectator was always withdrawn from the offence itself, to indulge in sympathy with the offender,—he being regarded as a victim to a sanguinary system of criminal jurisprudence. Even when the executions are for murder, those executions do not operate by way of example. It is too notorious to be denied, that the utmost levity is manifested by many of the spectators. Numbers of them, indeed, attend those painful spectacles with no other view than that of picking pockets, or otherwise practising their light-fingered profession.

The scenes which were sometimes exhibited at the Old Bailey when our criminal code existed in all its unmitigated rigour, were of the most shocking nature. On one occasion, about twenty years since, no fewer than twenty-one human beings were executed there on one morning, and all for secondary offences. Let any one only fancy that he sees all those unfortunate persons suspended for an hour in the air, in the midst of one of our most crowded thoroughfares, and he will be able to form some idea of

what must have been the shock which every humane mind must have received, who accidentally, or otherwise, was fated to witness so barbarous a spectacle. It consists with my own private knowledge, that in some cases strangers coming from the country, who knew nothing of there being executions at the particular time, have had their feelings so shocked by suddenly witnessing such sights, as never afterwards entirely to recover from the effects of the scene. To me it appears as clear as any moral proposition can be, that revelation, justice, humanity, and even social expediency, all loudly proclaim, that no crime but that of wilfully taking the life of a fellow-creature, ought to be punished with death. Whether even the murderer ought to die by the hands of the executioner, is a question with many of the most excellent and enlightened men in the country. They think that the Divine Being has never delegated to man the right of shedding the blood of a fellow-man; and that solitary imprisonment would answer all the ends of justice. On this point I

will express no opinion of my own, not being quite decided either way. It is one, however, which is deserving the most serious attention of the legislature and the country.

I cannot close my chapter on Newgate, without a word or two respecting two of the leading individuals connected with it. I allude to the Rev. Dr. Cotton, the Ordinary, and Mr. Baker. Dr. Cotton is a man who is deeply imbued with the spirit of that religion whose minister he is. There is something serious in his very appearance. His countenance is grave, and his demeanour is of that nature which becomes his sacred office. His white, long, flowing hair, coupled with his advanced years, impart something of an unusually venerable aspect to his appearance. He is indefatigable in his attention to the duties of his office; and the respect with which he invariably inspires all who come in contact with him, often procures him access to criminals who peremptorily refuse to admit of the visits of other pious individuals. He has, there can be no question,

been the means of doing much good within the walls of Newgate.

Of Mr. Baker I may say the same. His Christian philanthropy has been productive of great spiritual benefit to the unhappy individuals who, since he began to visit Newgate, have been sentenced to death. He is a man of a kind and benevolent heart, and spares no amount of personal exertion where there is even the chance of doing good. His manners are conciliatory in no ordinary degree, and have often paved the way to the minds of culprits, when a sterner or more unbending exhibition of conduct, would have failed to secure attention. He is respected by all about the place, as well as by those of the unfortunate inmates who have occasion to come in contact with him. He has been the instrument of much spiritual good within the walls of Newgate: it is to be hoped he will yet be the instrument of a great deal more. He is not officially connected with the place; but performs all his labours gratuitously from the pure desire of doing good.

CHAPTER V.

PENNY-A-LINERS.

Precariousness of their employment—Their labour and enterprise—Their character—Their ingenuity in finding employment for themselves—The feeling they entertain towards each other—Various anecdotes respecting them—Immutability of their character and phraseology—Concluding observations.

EVERY one has heard of a class of persons in connexion with the London journals, called "Penny-a-Liners;" but none but those who are intimately acquainted with the arrangements of newspaper offices, know anything about them. They are altogether a singular race; they are a class, in a great measure, by themselves; they live by the press, and yet they do not, strictly

speaking, belong to the press. They have no regular sum for their labours; sometimes no sum at all. If there be what the thimble-riggers at Greenwich and other fairs call "the fortune of war" in any line of business, it is in theirs. Sometimes they will fag away without a moment's intermission for seven or eight hours, writing in that time as much matter as would fill from a column to a column and a half of a morning newspaper, walking, it may be, in addition, five or six miles, and yet not receive one penny, notwithstanding all their enterprise and exertion. No paper is bound to use the matter, or any part of it, which they furnish; for they were not sent by any one connected with the press, to the meetings or the coroner's inquests, of whose proceedings their reports usually consist, but went of their own accord. In other words, it was all matter of speculation; quite a toss up whether they should receive the Irishman's fortune—nothing at all; or whether they should pocket five or six pounds by the adventure. The former, I must, however, say, is the most fre-

quent occurrence. I have no idea that we shall ever have a treatise, with illustrative examples, of any value, "On the Caprices of Fortune," until it is written by a Penny-a-Liner. To-day they have not one farthing in their pockets; to-morrow, the entire sum due to them by the daily papers may be several pounds. When their matter is inserted, or, to use their own phraseology, their copy is used, they are paid at the rate of three-halfpence for every line. The price originally was a penny a line; hence the origin of their designation. A column of a morning paper produces at this rate from thirty to forty shillings. It is but seldom, however, one of them is so fortunate as to get an entire column of matter into any of the papers; but he does now and then get in half a column or so, into three or four out of the six morning papers; and the joint produce is a few pounds. It often happens, that owing to the press of parliamentary or other matter furnished by the regular reporters of the morning journals, or to the absence of any peculiar interest in the matter

they have procured, that some of them will not realise a sovereign for weeks in succession. On the other hand, they have the good fortune of occasionally meeting with "something," which not only enables them to clear off old scores, but replenishes their pockets for some time to come. A "horrible murder," such as that of Thurtell's, rejoices the hearts of the Penny-a-Liners. They call it a "windfall." To work they set directly, and everything connected with the murdered party and the murderer, is hunted out by them with an alacrity which exceeds all belief. If no romantic materials exist, they call in the aid of their inventive faculties. They consider anything bearing on the romantic or horrible as a sort of mine, which they work with most exemplary industry. The produce, as I have already hinted, is sometimes considerable. One of them made, from first to last, nearly 70*l.* out of Thurtell's murder. In 1833, another reaped an abundant harvest. The "subject," as they sometimes call it, was an inquest on the body of a man in Shadwell,

who had been suspected to have been murdered by a policeman. One person chanced to have a monopoly of it, and the inquest lasted five days; and as each of the morning papers had from a column and a half to two columns of the proceedings daily, it brought him about 50*l.*

But the Penny-a-Liners do not confine their exertions within the limits of the metropolis: in the true spirit of speculation, if matters are dull in town, they will go when they hear of anything important, two or three hundred miles into the country. In many instances these adventures prove entire failures; owing either to the thing not turning out as they expected, or to the editors of the morning papers sending down their own reporters to report the proceedings. The hardship, in such cases, is particularly great: they have endured much anxiety of mind, encountered much bodily fatigue, and incurred the expense of several pounds, which they had most probably raised with great difficulty, all to no purpose. Sometimes, however, a good hit is made in this way: the best one of late,

was the reporting the proceedings of an inquest on the bodies of some men who had been shipwrecked on the northern coast, and where, it was suspected, some of the more influential of the parties in the neighbourhood had taken from the persons of the drowned men, considerable property. The proceeds to the young man who went down on the occasion, could not have been less than from 40*l.* to 50*l.*

I have alluded to the way in which the Penny-a-Liners work "mines" of this kind. The quantity of words they use is amazing. Dean Swift once remarked, that a surgeon would take half an hour to tell you that a patient had broken his leg, whereas the unfortunate man himself would acquaint you with the fact in five words—"I have broken my leg." It is the same with the Penny-a-Liners. They will spin out to the extent of half a column, what might be given with the greatest ease in a dozen lines. And it is all quite natural; the solution of the thing is to be found in the fact, that they are paid by the quantity. If they have occasion to mention

that a deputation waited for any particular purpose on Mr. Spring Rice, they will say, "waited on the Right Honourable Thomas Spring Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his own office, in Downing Street, Whitehall." They are fond of expletives. If they have occasion to say that the tendency of any measure is to produce tranquillity, they will say, "peace, concord, harmony, and tranquillity." A few months since, one of them, in stating the fact that one of the doors of Newgate was opened to admit some persons who were on a visit to it, expressed himself as follows:—"The door was unlocked, unbarred, unbolted, and opened." But not only do the Penny-a-Liners spin out any report or piece of information they are fortunate enough to procure, but they will sometimes write a good part of a newspaper column, to tell their readers that they have nothing to communicate. They thus improve on the American editor, who published a second edition to inform the public that he had no additional intelligence to give. A few months since, a Penny-a-Liner wrote a full

quarter of a column to say that the subject of peerage reform was *not* brought forward at a particular meeting of the Marylebone vestry. This reminds me of the author who wrote forty pages of a preface to his book for the purpose of proving that no preface was necessary.

A more unenviable mode of life than that of the Penny-a-Liners does not exist. Dependent entirely on their own resources, their minds are constantly racked with anxiety, to find out when or where anything is to be done. They know not a moment's repose. Every new day brings with it its own anxieties. They are wonderfully quick at scenting out intelligence of any important meeting about to be held, or any other matter which they suppose likely to produce a penny. Falstaff knew royalty by instinct; and they seem to find out "subjects" by the same quality. Things that nobody else ever heard a word about, are so well and generally known to them, that out of the eighteen or twenty which compose their number, there will be a muster of nine or ten. Often, indeed, do

their numbers exceed that of the persons taking part in the proceedings they report. At a meeting held two years ago in the vestry-room of St. Clement Danes, relative to some parish matters, the number of parishioners present was seven; the number of Penny-a-Liners nine!

It is impossible to say how much they average per month; but their vocation is certainly not a lucrative one. I have no idea that taking one month with another, the majority of them earn more than six pounds, or thirty shillings per week.

If an Irishman of the lower orders be asked what country he comes from, he adds, after telling you it is from "ould Ireland," "and sure there are good and bad of all countries." The observation applies with special force to the Penny-a-Liners. If ever the extremes of good and bad met in any class of men, it is in them. I am sorry to say, however, that the bad preponderates in number over the good. Some of them are great drinkers. One poor fellow died last year who was known, for some years past,

to have been drunk for weeks in succession. Tom Paine is said to have been drunk six weeks before his death. The Penny-a-Liner to whom I refer, has repeatedly been drunk for a longer period than that. His favourite drink was porter, with an occasional glass of gin by way of parenthesis. Some time before his death, he drank at one sitting of several hours, in a public house in Fleet-street, the astonishing quantity of twenty-two pints of porter! The statement may appear incredible: it did so to myself when I first heard it; but my curiosity having led me to make inquiries into the thing, I may mention that its truth is placed beyond all doubt. There are some very excellent young men amongst them, whom one cannot but regret to see so unfortunately circumstanced; but the majority are destitute of all honourable principle, and of very exceptionable habits. They never hesitate for a moment at palming on the sub-editors of the morning papers—for it is the province of the sub-editors to accept or reject

their matter—the purest inventions of their own, provided they think it can be done without detection. And in order to make the most of the thing, two of them will sometimes come to an understanding together, that the one shall send a detailed contradiction to-morrow of what the other had sent to-day. The proceeds, in such a case, are shared between the parties. Nay, to such a length in deliberate imposition will some of them go, that the same person, under a different name, and writing in a disguised hand, will contradict to-morrow what he himself has sent to-day. The editors of newspapers, of course, always take care, when they have detected any fraud of this kind, to exclude any future matter which the party may send; but the latter often evades the effects of the editor's determination, by assuming some new name, or by employing some one to send his copy in theirs, making some allowance to the party who proves so accommodating. All the "romantic affairs," "mysterious circumstances," &c. which from

time to time appear in the London journals, worded in general terms, are specimens of the inventive capabilities of the Penny-a-Liners. I knew one who made from 200*l.* to 250*l.* every year by repeating the same series of invented stories in rotation. The whole number was turned over every three years.

The Penny-a-Liners sometimes bring themselves into awkward predicaments by a too liberal exercise of their inventive faculties. They generally, however, contrive, by having recourse to some ingenious expedient or other, to make their escape out of it. Some years ago, one of the fraternity gave a "full and particular"—I cannot say "true"—account of an alleged suicide of a gentleman by leaping off Waterloo Bridge into the river. The writer, of course, said he witnessed it, and was surpassingly pathetic and eloquent in the expression of his regret that the unfortunate deceased should have "committed the rash act." An elaborate description of the personal appearance of the party was given. The body, of course, was not found. The account having appeared in two of

the morning papers, two gentlemen called at the office of one of the journals, and expressing their apprehensions that from the description given of the unhappy man, it was a near relation of their own who had been missing two days—wished to see the writer, to make some further inquiries as to the indentity of the deceased. An intimation to this effect was sent to the Penny-a-Liner, who, on the first blush of the thing, was afraid he had got himself, to use his own elegant phraseology, "into a hobble." However, a thought afterwards struck him which he doubted not would enable him to get out of the difficulty with great *éclat.* He accordingly proceeded to the office where the two gentlemen were anxiously awaiting his arrival.

"O, we're very sorry to trouble you; but this is a very affecting case," observed one of the gentlemen, in melancholy accents, immediately upon the Penny-a-Liner presenting himself.

"It is, indeed," observed the other, sighing deeply as he spoke.

"About the unhappy man who threw himself into the river, I suppose you mean," said the

Penny-a-Liner, putting on a face as grave as that of an undertaker, and appearing to sympathise feelingly with the manifest distresses of the gentleman.

"Yes, about the unfortunate deceased," observed one of the gentlemen.

"Ay, we're very much afraid he's a near relation of ours, Sir," remarked the other. "Would you do us the favour of giving us any further information respecting his personal appearance, so that we may be able to satisfy our minds as to whether or not he is our relative?" he added.

"What was the colour of your relative's hair?" inquired the Penny-a-Liner.

"Yellow haired," answered both at once.

"O, then, the unfortunate deceased was not your relative; for his hair was jet black."

A gleam of joy irradiated the countenances of the two gentlemen. "I assure you, Sir, we are infinitely obliged to you for your readiness in complying with our wishes."

"Don't name it," remarked the inventive genius.

"Exceedingly obliged to you, indeed," said

the second gentleman. "Will you accept of a couple of sovereigns for the trouble to which we have thus put you?" at the same time depositing two circular pieces of gold in his hand.

"Really, you are very kind. I am extremely happy the unfortunate gentleman was not your relative," said the Penny-a-Liner, putting the sovereigns into his pocket. He went home, and penned another "invention" that evening, respecting the alleged suicide of "an interesting and elegantly dressed female"—all the females of Penny-a-Liners are "interesting and elegantly dressed"—by throwing herself into the Regent's canal.

Another ingenious expedient for getting out of "a scrape," as the Penny-a-Liners sometimes call such things, was lately resorted to by one of the brotherhood. He had fabricated a very elaborate account of some supposed "melancholy accident," the scene of which he fixed at a particular place in the suburbs of town. On the day after the paragraph, rêdolent with expressions of deep regret at having to communi-

cate the painful intelligence, &c., appeared a letter, with the writer's name attached to it, sent to the editor of the journal in which the account was published, denying that any such circumstance had occurred. The editor sent for the Penny-a-Liner to take him to task for the unfounded statement. On his way to the "Morning ————" office, the latter called on a friend, and said he was afraid he would be found out this time, adding that he did not know what he could say when the journalist should show him the letter denying the truth of the paragraph.

"Och, faith, and it's myself will be after telling you what to say," observed his friend, who was a 'Paddy from Cork.'

"What do you think I should say?" inquired the other, eagerly.

"Why, tell him to be sure, whenever he shows you the letther, that it's written by a particular friend of your own, who knew the paragraph was yours, for the purpose of having a little fun;*

* The signature was Thomas Smith, and the letter was dated Exeter-place, Mile-end Road.

and that the writer knows quite well that the whole thing is intirely thrue."

The idea struck the Penny-a-Liner as excellent; and he determined to act on the hint. He proceeded forthwith to the sanctorum of the editor.

"So, Sir," said the journalist, sternly, as he entered the apartment—"So, Sir, you have been injuring the Morning ————, and grossly deceiving the public. Look at that, Sir,"—tossing the letter down on the table before him.

The Penny-a-Liner took up the letter, and opening it, first looked at the signature, and then at the date. "Why, Mr. P.—" affecting to enjoy the alleged joke—"why, Mr. P., this letter is written by my own particular friend Tom Smith, of Mile-end Road. I told him I had written the paragraph, and he has only done this for a bit of a lark."

"O, if that's all," observed the editor, in a subdued tone, "if that's all, the fire is the best place in which to insert the letter which the blockhead wished to publish." Mr. P. thrust

the letter into the fire that instant, and he and the Penny-a-Liner parted on better terms than ever, Mr. P. apologising for the unnecessary trouble he had given the paragraph-monger.

I shall only mention one other instance of the trouble into which Penny-a-Liners often get themselves by their fabricated accounts of the "horrible," and of the ingenuity they evince in getting out again. Sometime before the death of Mr. Perry, the then proprietor of the Morning Chronicle, a long account of a "most horrible murder," said to have been committed in an open space called the B——— at Brompton, was sent to him. Never for one moment suspecting its accuracy, he inserted it in the paper of the following day. In two days afterwards a letter was forwarded to him, signed by about thirty of the most respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood, denying that any such circumstance had occurred, and severely lecturing the journalist for giving publicity to false reports of so serious a nature. As one of the evils which had arisen from the publication of the paragraph,

it was stated that servants were afraid to go out about the neighbourhood after dark, and that the children of the inhabitants in the vicinity were nearly frightened out of their wits at the alleged murder. Mr. Perry, in the first instance, published the letter contradicting the pretended murder, and then sent for the Penny-a-Liner. The rascal stoutly insisted that the whole narrative was true to the letter, and expressed his firm assurance that the journalist would immediately receive a counter-statement from some of the inhabitants of Brompton, confirming all that he had stated. "Well, Sir, if I do, you shall be absolved from all blame," said the journalist, in gruff tones: "but if not," he immediately added,—"but if not, remember, Sir, that you shall never write another line for the 'Morning Chronicle.'" The journalist and the Penny-a-Liner then parted. That very evening Mr. Perry received a letter signed "Veritas," with the two-penny post-mark of Brompton on it, in which the writer assured the Editor of the 'Morning Chronicle,' that every word of

the account of the "horrible murder at Brompton" was strictly true, and that the object of the parties who sent the contradiction of it was, by dwelling on the fears of servants to go out in the neighbourhood of the place at night, to get a police established in the neighbourhood. The Penny-a-Liner wrote the letter himself, and to prevent suspicion had gone out and put it into the Brompton two-penny post-office with his own hand. Mr. P— was perfectly satisfied: he thought the Penny-a-Liner was an injured man, and was happy that he had not thoughtlessly made him a victim to the faithful performance of his duty.

But though the Penny-a-Liners, in playing such tricks as I have mentioned, often escape detection for years, they are usually found out at last. Some years ago, the circumstances under which the impositions of one of the fraternity were brought to light, were amusing in no ordinary degree. Joseph Thomson, who dealt in invented paragraphs touching inquests, horrible murders, and so forth, on a much more extensive scale

than any of his Penny-a-Line contemporaries, chanced one day to "get up" a very affecting coroner's inquest. The inquest was represented as having been held at the "Cat and Bag"* public house, Islington, and the jury, as all juries at coroner's inquests are, were "highly respectable." With the view of making the case more attractive, the Penny-a-Liner determined on giving the paragraph a touch of the romantic. His story—a story in a double sense—was to the effect, that the unfortunate deceased was a young woman of great personal attractions, and dressed in the extreme of fashion—that her body had been found on the previous morning in the Regent's Canal—that she had been walking on the banks of the canal the night before, with a young gentleman, supposed to be her lover, and that two love letters, without a name attached to them, were found in her bosom. These pretended facts were spun out to the great length which Penny-a-Liners patronise,

* It can hardly be necessary to say that there was no such public-house.

and they were worked up in most elaborate and high-flown language. Of course, the inquest excited the deepest interest in the neighbourhood. Even the coroner himself—a very unusual thing—seemed deeply affected while the examination into the probable way in which the unfortunate deceased came by her death, was going on. The verdict of the jury was the very sapient one of—"Found drowned." The inventor of the story, who used to go by the name of Mungo among the brotherhood of Penny-a-Liners, having finished the thing, went with his "copy"—a technical term among this class of persons—to the office of a Sunday paper, now boasting a very large circulation. It chanced, that while the paragraph was lying on the editor's desk, and while he himself was temporarily absent from his room, another Penny-a-Liner, a native of the Emerald Isle, called Tim O'Callaghan, dropped in with an account of some horrible accident which had really happened. Seeing the open copy before him, and being attracted by the title, three times underlined by

large scores, of "Melancholy Case," his curiosity got the better of his good manners, and he began to read the paragraph. Once begun, there was no ending—not, at any rate, for a Penny-a-Liner —till he got to the close of the paragraph. He accordingly read till he got to the verdict of the jury, and having a good memory all the pretended facts of the case were distinctly impressed on his mind. As he quitted the office, a thought struck him. "Thunder and turf!" said he to himself, "why should this spalpeen of a Penny-a-Line reporther have all the benefit of this maalancholy caase to himself?" Pat hurried to the nearest public-house and drew out an account of the same case, strictly adhering to the supposed facts, and sent it to the only other Sunday paper which he thought likely to use it on the following day,—this being on a Saturday. Pat's paragraph duly appeared, to the ineffable amazement of Mungo. As the thing never had an existence, other than in his own imagination, he knew on a little reflection, that there must, as he himself said, be some foul play; and the conclusion

to which he came came was, that some subordinate in the office to which he sent his manuscript, had picked out the facts, dressed up the thing in his own style, and sent the paragraph to the office of the other newspaper with the view of getting a few shillings to himself. "I'm blowed though," ejaculated he to himself, "if the rascal gets the money," and in order to prevent his fingering a sixpence of the produce, Mungo made a point of being at the office on its opening on Monday morning. He claimed the amount due for the paragraph.

"Why, the man's mad," said the clerk.

"Not a bit of it," said Mungo.

"Then you're a rogue," observed the clerk.

"How do you mean?" asked Mungo.

"Why, when you could go and ask, or expect me to pay money for, what does not belong to you."

"It's my inquest," remarked Mungo.

"That's a downright invention, I must be plain to tell you," said the other.

Mungo's face slightly coloured at the word

"invention," supposing, in the first instance, that the clerk applied it to the paragraph, and that his tricks in the inventive way had been found out.

"*What's* an invention?" asked Mungo.

"Why, your saying that the inquest is your's. It's Tim O'Callaghan's."

"I maintain it is mine. I'm ready to prove that——"

Here Mungo was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Tim O'Callaghan.

"You are just come in time," said the clerk, addressing himself to Tim as he entered the office.

"What's the matther?" said Tim hastily, and in a strong Connaught brogue.

"Why this person," pointing to Mungo, "says that your account of the inquest at the 'Cat and Bag' on Saturday, is his."

"O bad luck to the ——! How could he be after saying such a thing?"

"I insist on it, that the matter of it is mine," observed Mungo.

"Och," observed Tim, "you may insist on

what you plase, but where's the mother's son will belave you? It's in my hand-writing: is it not, Mr. Jones?" addressing himself to the clerk.

"It is, certainly," answered the latter.

"And sure isn't that the best proof that the inquest's mine," said Paddy, eagerly. "Come, tip me the money, Mr. Jones, if it's convanient."

"I say the inquest's mine," said Mungo, in a very angry tone.

"Never mind him, Mr. Jones," said Tim, "he does not belave the thing himself."

"You were not at the inquest at all," said Mungo, addressing himself to Pat.

"And that same's a thundering untruth," answered Tim.

"In what part of the room did you stand then?" inquired Mungo.

"And sure I'm not obligated to tell you that," said Pat, assuming a look of infinite surprise at such a question being put to him.

"Ah, because you can't tell," remarked the other. "You were not there at all."

"But I was though, as sure as I hope to —"

"You may tell him at once," said the clerk, "where you stood, if that be any satisfaction to him."

"Well, then," said Tim, "I stood directly behind the beadle."

"What sort of a man was he?" inquired Mungo.

"What sort of a man was he? Why, I'll tell you what sort of a man he was," answered Tim, after a moment's hesitation, "sure, he was a very little thick sort of man."

"O, that proves at once you were not there; for he was a very tall thin person."

"Faith, and perhaps it's myself am mistaking the beadle for some other person. I'm sure there *was* a little stout man in the room. But as for the matter of that it, does not signify at all at all: I was there, and wrote the paragraph."

"You're a confounded l——," shouted Mungo, unable any longer to restrain his indignation at the cool effrontery of Tim, "You're a confounded l——, for no such inquest was ever held. The whole was my own pure invention."

"What a couple of consummate rogues you are!" said the clerk. "The one fabricates and the other steals the paragraph. None of you shall ever finger a farthing of the money, and a single line of your copy shall never from this day be used by our paper."

Another way in which Penny-a-Liners display their ingenuity is, to use a common proverb, in "making mountains out of mole hills." Meetings, or circumstances which possess no earthly importance whatever except to the parties immediately interested, are worked up in such a manner as to have all the appearance of matters of the deepest importance. I could give a variety of amusing instances of this kind. Let one suffice. A year or two ago, a person of whom nobody knew anything, but whose wardrobe was "all tattered and torn," like that of

the hero in the nursery story who "kissed the maiden all forlorn"—took it into his head, for some reason or other, to call a meeting in one of the newspapers, to take steps to establish a joint-stock company—capital 150,000*l.*—for carrying into effect some great public improvement. Nobody, however, but the advertiser's own brother, a needy adventurer; an acquaintance; and three or four Penny-a-Liners, responded to his call. The adventurer himself took the chair without the formality of being voted into it. He stated the purposes for which "the meeting" had assembled, and expatiated on the great public advantage of which his project would be productive *when* carried into effect. The Penny-a-Liners were all as busy at work as if the destinies of the world had hung on the words which dropped from the chairman's lips. Having exhausted his eloquence he resumed his seat. The brother then rose and proposed the first resolution. He spoke in support of it at some length. The acquaintance seconded it with "great pleasure." After the

latter had had his "say," the resolution was put. Need I say what was its fate? It was carried *unanimously*. The same process was gone through with the remaining resolutions. The chairman then got up an explanation to the Penny-a-Liners, as to the causes of the thin attendance, and begged them not to say anything about the numbers present—a very unnecessary request by the way, their own interest being to make the most of it. The question of adjournment to that day week was then put and agreed to. In the papers of the following morning a flaming account of the proceedings appeared. The hour for the adjourned meeting taking place, arrived in due course. The "meeting" was held, consisting of exactly the same parties, with the addition of a person, whom the chairman called his friend. Proceedings substantially the same again took place. The Penny-a-Liners were at their post; the meeting was again adjourned to that day-week; and the papers of the following morning again contained an account of the proceedings. "This day

week," once more arrived; the Penny-a-Liners were "punctual as lovers to the moment sworn," but behold the door was shut; neither the chairman, nor the other orators, nor anybody else, made their appearance.

In some cases where there is a scarcity of meetings ready made to their hands, the Penny-a-Liners club their wits together to get one or two up for themselves. A very remarkable instance of this occurred about fourteen or fifteen months ago. The case is particularly deserving of mention, because of the circumstances connected with it. They managed—there were three of them engaged in the affair—to get some hand-bills printed, and to procure from an eminent auctioneer the use of one of his rooms for the meeting. The object was to raise a subscription for the wife and two children of a deceased actor of some celebrity. Copies of the hand-bill were sent to several of the most distinguished nobility; and the Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of St. Albans, and some others, severally sent donations, one of them amounting to

twenty pounds, and another to five pounds. It was expected that the thing would have "taken," and I confess I am surprised, under all the circumstances, that it did not. I certainly thought there would at least have been a strong muster of theatrical people, as the situation of the widow and children of the deceased, might soon be the situation of many of their wives and children. Not so, however; not a single actor was there; and of all the applications which had been made for contributions, to persons connected with the histrionic art, only one forwarded any donation, and that a very small sum. Had they known the parties by whom and the circumstances under which the affair had been got up, that would, undoubtedly, have been an excuse for taking no notice of the appeal made to them for contributions, or the request made to attend the meeting; but they knew nothing about the matter, and they would have evinced, I am afraid, the same indifference to the claims of the widow and orphans of a late fellow-performer, had the facts been otherwise. The time appointed for the meeting

arrived. An application had been previously made to the eminent and eloquent chairman to whom I have already referred, to preside on the occasion. Expecting a full meeting, and anticipating, no doubt, much glory from his oratorical exhibition on the occasion, blended, I am confident, with sympathy for the destitute widow and orphans of the deceased, he engaged to take the chair. On going into the large room where the meeting was to take place, he could scarcely credit the evidence of his eyes when he saw only five persons there, three of whom were those who had waited on him to ask him to preside, and the remaining two were acquaintances whom they had brought with them. Mr. ——— looked perfectly petrified. The whole affair appeared to him to be something beyond the limits of earthly contingencies: it was a mystery, and a very unpleasant mystery, to boot. The trio of Penny-a-Liners—it is but right to add, however, that he was not previously aware of their manner of earning a livelihood—the Penny-a-liners saw at once the mingled emotions of sur-

prise and dismay which filled his breast, and they with singular dexterity "got up" some story or other about the badness of the weather, or inconvenience of the hour, or some such thing, to account for the absence of persons whom they were certain would have attended, and whose hearts they were sure were present with them. By one means or other they actually got Mr. —— to take the chair. He opened the business of the "meeting," in a speech of some length, in which he displayed his wonted volubility, blended with much that was excellent in feeling, and happy in expression. It is true, he did not seem so much at home as when describing some gentleman's estate which he "has received instructions to sell;" but that was doubtless in a great measure owing to the remarkable paucity of auditors, which everybody who knows anything of oratory, knows has a most paralysing influence on all public speakers. Resolutions were moved, seconded, and carried, after which the meeting broke up. In the newspapers of the following morning a flaming account appear-

ed of the proceedings. Instead, however, of the Penny-a-Liners giving their own names as the movers and seconders of the several resolutions, they had the sagacity to speak of "gentlemen whose names they could not learn" having discharged those duties. In short, the impression on the public mind next day, from the way in which the report of the proceedings was drawn up, must have been that the meeting was one of very great importance. The only party for whom I felt sorry on the occasion, was the wife of the deceased. I can easily imagine how her bosom must have heaved with transports of delight when she first saw the account of what had transpired. Her joys, however, were only raised to the highest pitch to be dashed again to the ground. Soon would she learn that all had been a delusion—a sort of dream—which had passed through her mind. What became of the subscription afterwards, I could never learn, though from the highly honourable character of the chairman, every farthing of the sum which had gone through

his hands, with, very likely, a donation from himself, was sure to be forthwith handed over to the widow, for her own and her children's benefit.

It were endless to enumerate the stratagems—for the most part very ingenious ones—to which the Penny-a-Liners, in "dull times," have recourse to furnish themselves with the means of earning a few shillings. With the exceptions to which I have before referred, they are indeed a class of persons who will hesitate at nothing, from mere moral considerations, that they think likely to put a trifle in their pockets.

If one were to judge from the "copy" they send to the newspaper-offices, they must be regarded as a race of beings who possess the attribute of ubiquity. They bring intelligence from the remotest extremities of the metropolis, of circumstances which occurred, according to their own showing, at the same moment. This, however, is chiefly in those cases in which they send their copy to the Sunday journals. These last papers only pay for intelligence relating to occurrences which take place on the Saturday.

In those cases, accordingly, in which the accounts of meetings, coroner's inquests, &c. which were held on Thursday or Friday, have not been "used," by the morning papers of Friday or Saturday, they dress the affairs up again, and represent them as having occurred on Saturday, and then send them to the Sunday papers. The matter itself may be, and usually is, correctly enough given; but the date of the occurrence is changed. This is the solution of the enigma, of how one of them manages to give so much of what he calls Saturday's news, though all occurring at the same time and at the most distant parts of the Metropolis.

The spirit of opposition to one another, exists in an unusual degree among Penny-a-Liners. They are ever devising means to overreach and steal a march on each other. In their anxiety to leave their individual "copy" first at the different offices, they will often, one after another, quit a meeting before the proceedings are half over, and anticipate the remainder the best way they can. Some time ago an interesting

coroner's inquest was held at Pimlico, and as from the nature of the evidence adduced, speculation as to the result would have been quite a hazardous affair, they were obliged to await the deliverance of the foreman of the jury. No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than they all—there were ten present on the occasion—started off like so many race horses through the Park, and down the Strand, to the no small astonishment of the lieges, who wondered what it could be "all about." There is nothing of greater value to Penny-a-Liners than a pair of good legs. I have heard of their having carried the spirit of rivalry to such lengths, as that the second who arrived at the office, took the copy of his more expeditious opponent off the sub-editor's desk, so that his own might have a better chance of being used. It is, however, but rarely that opportunities of playing such tricks on each other, are afforded them. Instead of being allowed to enter the editorial apartment at all, they are now

obliged to put all their "copy" into a box, through a slit, set apart for the purpose.

As it would be impossible, by the usual method of writing, to furnish copies to the morning papers, in a reasonable time, of any report of proceedings or occurrences of interest, they use a certain kind of manifold writing apparatus, by means of which they "do" six copies at once. The different Journals are consequently supplied simultaneously with the matter which they furnish. The paper employed for the purpose is what is called silver paper. The technical term for it, in the newspaper offices, is "flimsy."

Moralists dwell on the mutability of all things earthly. They forget at the time that there is such a class of persons as Penny-a-Liners. The rule, that all things under the sun are changeable, has fewer exceptions, perhaps, than any other that could be named. It has, however, *some* exceptions. Master Punch I have always looked on as one exception; Penny-a-

Liners, as I have just hinted, are another. Punch has been from time immemorial the same uproarious, bad-tempered, pugnacious, and mischievous fellow we now see him; and he will doubtless continue so to the end of the chapter. Time has made no alteration on him: his character has undergone no modification with the lapse of ages. He is an incorrigible rascal: the schoolmaster can make no impression on him. Intellect, and civilisation, and refinement, may march as rapidly as they please; he will not stir a step with them. Not less proof against the mutations of time is the Penny-a-Liner. That very venerable personage, "the oldest inhabitant," knows no difference on him within the wide range of his experience. History records no alteration or modification in his character. What he was centuries ago, he is still. He retains all his principal phrases precisely in the state he used them generations since. If a coroner's inquest is held over the body of some unfortunate suicide, or any person who came by a sudden death, it was, as before

mentioned, before "a highly respectable jury." Does any serious accident, no matter of what kind, happen, then the announcement of the most distressing feature in the occurrence is prefaced with a "when melancholy to relate." Is some person's premises unfortunately on fire, the "devouring element" and "dreadful conflagration" are sure to have a prominent place in the descriptive paragraph. If the fire has been a destructive one, and the account consequently more lengthened than usual, then you may rely on it that these phrases will, as Junius says of the figures of Sir William Draper, dance through it in all the mazes of metaphorical confusion. Is some unhappy man doomed to suffer on the scaffold, the Penny-a-Liner is sure to adhere to the time immemorial usage of the brotherhood, and to wind up his account of the spectacle by informing us, that "on the signal being given, the drop fell," and that the unhappy party was "launched into eternity." And as the Penny-a-Liner is the same now as he was in past ages, so will he continue the same through ages yet

to come. "What is Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba?" What are the modifications of society, produced by circumstances, to the Penny-a-Liner, or he to the modifications of society? He is a being by himself. He stands as isolated from everybody and everything else, as if he were the only human being or object in the world. Not more immutable are the everlasting Alps, than is the character of the Penny-a-Liner. Down he goes to the latest posterity, with all his peculiar habits and phrases unmodified and unaltered. He transmits them to his successors in precisely the same state as he himself received them from those who went before him. Never was there a more faithful guardian of a public trust.

It may be right to repeat, in conclusion, that the remarks I have made in a former part of the chapter respecting the morals and literary capabilities of the Penny-a-Liners do not apply universally: they only apply to them as a class. There are not only among them men of unexceptionable morals, but of great talent. Many

of those who now occupy important situations connected with the press, have commenced their career as Penny-a-Liners. One of the best known Poor-Law Commissioners was for many years a Penny-a-Liner. Cobbett, with his usual disposition to call names, used always to term this gentleman "Penny-a-Line ——." There are at present several gentlemen of some celebrity in the literary world, who have been for a considerable portion of their lives, Penny-a-Liners; only they do not associate with nor have any connexion with the brotherhood generally.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY ISOTSON AND PALMER, SAVOY STREET.

00044773

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016